

"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS, JUN.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

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SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 1871.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XLIX. MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

MAUD and her mother were tête-à-tête at dinner that day. Lady Vernon scarcely spoke; she seemed fatigued.

Such meetings seldom happened. They embarrassed both mother and daughter, between whom there was an undefined but incurable estrangement.

Under such circumstances a ladies' dinner does not last very long; and they were soon, each provided with a book, taking a very unsociable tea in the drawing-room.

A wood fire smouldered in the grate. The evening was a little chilly, and made it pleasant.

Maud sat by it in a low chair with her feet on a stool. She leaned back with her book before her. The silence was only broken by the rustle of the pages as she turned them over.

At length Maud lowered the book to her lap, and raised her eyes.

They met the large grey eyes of Lady Vernon fixed on her, and the flush that indicated some secret agitation was in her cheeks. The mutual gaze continued for some two or three seconds, and then Lady Vernon turned her eyes away, as it seemed to Maud, haughtily.

It had not lasted long; but it made Maud uncomfortable. She knew her mother's face so well, that she read danger in that glance.

She waited some time, expecting something to come. But as Lady Vernon remained silent Maud took up her book again, and read a page or two; but her mind did not follow the lines with her eyes.

In a little time she put down her book again, and looked up.

Her mother was again looking at her, and this time she spoke.

"Did you hear," she asked, in her coldest tones, "that Captain Vivian drove through the town of Roydon to-day?"

"Did he, really?"

"I should not have thought it necessary to ask you a second time," she said, with a sneer. "Don't you know he did?"

"No, I did not hear that he was in the town since he left this," Maud replied.

"It is so nice of you, answering me so honestly," said Lady Vernon.

Maud looked at her, not quite certain whether the irony she suspected in her tone was real or fancied.

"Did you see any one to-day?" Lady Vernon reopened her conversation, after an interval, more dangerously.

"Miss Tintern was here to-day. She came in, hoping to see you, and then I took her a little walk."

"Oh! Then this has been a day of walking," said Lady Vernon, with something derisive in her tone, that terrified Maud for her secret, and Maud blushed.

Lady Vernon, deadly pale, held her with her steady grey eyes, and an insulting smile, for some seconds.

Then the elder lady turned slowly away, still smiling, and Maud felt that she could breathe.

How much hatred there seemed to Maud in that pale, cruel smile; how much hatred in those cold, strange tones, low and sweet as the faintest notes of a flute!

Maud was in momentary fear of a renewal of the torture. But a minute passed, five minutes, and there was no renewal of the attack. Her mother seemed to have forgotten her, and to have returned to her book, with no further intention of disturbing her studies.

Ten minutes passed. The room was still as death. Suddenly that soft, cold, sweet voice was again in her ear. If it had been a clap of thunder it could not have startled her more.

"Pray, Maud, did you meet any one to-day in your walk?"

There was in Lady Vernon's tone, air, and look that which fired the girl's indignation.

She returned her mother's look, undecided whether she would answer her at all.

Suddenly losing command of her temper, Lady Vernon exclaimed, sternly:

"How dare you look at me, your mother, so? Answer my question, and speak truth. Whom did you meet to-day?"

"I shan't answer," said Maud, flushing crimson. "What have I done that you should attack me with so much bitterness?"

"Come, Maud, recollect yourself," said Lady Vernon, recovering her colder manner. "You seem to forget that, as your mother, I have a right to know, from your own lips, whom you met to-day. Who was it?"

"I question your right to catechise me," returned Maud, now thoroughly roused. "If I am to remember your rights, you must remember mine. I shall be of age in a few weeks, and my own mistress. You are not to treat me any longer like a child."

"While you remain in my house you shall be amenable to me. I can't command affection, but I can command respect. You shall obey me. I'll make you obey me."

The flush had quite left her cheeks, her face was unnaturally white, and her lip, as white as her face, was trembling. Maud had never before seen her so terribly angry. But she was now past being daunted. She was herself very nearly as angry, and so the spark had started into flame, and the flame had gathered to a conflagration.

"That is not the way to make me obey you. That is not what you want. You wish to wound me, and to trample on me. You never loved me; you hate me; yes, you hate me—your own child, your only child. And what have I done? All my life trying to bring you to love me. That's over. I'll try no more—never. You'll teach me at last to hate you, as you hate me. I wish it were God's will to take me. Oh! this dreadful world!"

"Wicked people make it dreadful to themselves and to others," said Lady Vernon.

But Maud went on with her wild tirade.

"That poor girl who drowned herself in the mere at Golden Friars—they said she was wicked—she looked like an angel. Oh! for courage like hers to take the leap out of this frightful world!"

"That's a threat of suicide, as I understand it, unless I forego, not my rights, but my duty. You shan't deter me from doing it," said Lady Vernon. "You shall confess."

"I will not answer you. I will not confess. I have nothing to confess. Why do you use that insulting word? There has been nothing in my life I need ever have been ashamed or afraid to disclose."

Lady Vernon looked at her intently for a moment, and then laughed a cold little laugh of disdain.

But that counterfeit merriment did not last long. The false smile faded, and left a deeper shadow of menace on her face.

"Another person would answer a daughter who presumed to talk to them so, very differently. But I know only too well your lamentable weakness and violence; and I'll tell you, as you have not the grace or candour to admit it, that you cannot conceal the fact from me. You saw Captain Vivian to-day. You talked and walked with him, and returned to the house only a few minutes before you came into the shield-room this evening. You might as well have spoken frankly."

If it had not been for the anger provoked by Lady Vernon's language and manner, Maud would, I dare say, have undeceived her, now. But the devil of perverse pride had been evoked, and Maud answered:

"If you knew all this, why need you have asked me to tell you. I said I should answer nothing; and I shall not."

"You shall do more than answer," said Lady Vernon, rising to her feet, with a new access of passion, and confronting her daughter. "You shall now and here write me a letter renouncing Captain Vivian. Sit down at this desk and write it."

"No," answered Maud, also rising, "I'll do nothing of the kind. I'll place myself in no such ridiculous position."

Lady Vernon was astounded. Maud had never disputed a distinct command of hers before.

"Think again, Maud, you had better. I fear you are losing your head a little," she said, coldly.

"I need not think again; I won't write anything. I've said so, and I won't," answered Maud, with all the fiery blood of the Vernons careering in her veins.

"Then take the consequences of your insanity," said Lady Vernon, almost in a whisper, but with an audible stamp on the floor.

These two pairs of large grey eyes were encountering, all this time, in a burning gaze of mutual defiance.

So the unnatural alienation that had for so many years existed between mother and child had now at last found positive expression; and the angry passions of both were declared and active.

"I think I had better go to my own room," said Maud, in tones which trembled a little.

"Do," said Lady Vernon.

Maud walked straight to the door. She had opened it, and paused with the handle in her hand. It was only to say, hastily:

"Good-night, mamma."

"Good-night," returned Lady Vernon, in a tone that sounded like a curse.

And so Maud stepped out, with heightened colour, blazing eyes, and a countenance strangely proud, yet heart-broken.

She walked up-stairs with a humming in her ears, as if she had received a blow. Her dry, hot lips were whispering:

"No, never again: we never can be again even what we were before. It is all over; there is nothing ever to reconcile us. No, never, it can never be again."

When she got to her room, her maid Jones, advancing with her accustomed smile, exclaimed with a sudden halt and a change of countenance:

"La! Miss Maud, dear, what's the matter? you do look pale and queer!"

"Do I?" said Maud, vaguely. "No, not much. But I'm sorry, Jones," and she burst into a wild flood of tears.

"What is it, Miss Maud, my dear child; what's the matter?"

"Oh, Jones! if all the world were like you!"

And she placed her arms round her trusty maid's neck and kissed her.

"What is it, my dear? There, there, don't! Tell me, like a good child, what's the matter?"

"I'll tell you all, Jones, by-and-bye. It has come at last; it's as well it should. Mamma has been so unkind, and cruel, and insulting, and I was angry, and we've quarrelled—desperately. It can never be made up again, Jones; never, never."

"Nonsense, Miss Maud, what a fuss you make; it will all be nothing at all."

"I was violent—I was wrong—I spoke as I ought not—I blame myself. But, no,

Jones, it can never be made up—it is folly to think it. I know mamma too well. It is past that; she never forgives; and she never loved me; there is no use in trying to think it. She hates me now, and always will, and I'm sorry, but it can't be helped."

So she sobbed on, sitting in the great chair, with her face to the wall beside it, and honest Jones, who was disturbed and even shocked, said, with her hand on the big arm of the chair, leaning over her, and employing a powerful superlative of her own invention:

"Her ladyship's the very most religiousest lady in England, and the most charitablest, and you musn't to say or think so. She's strict, and will have her will obeyed, and you musn't gainsay her when she thinks she's right. But she's a just woman, and good. Now don't be crying so, darling, for you have only to say what you should say to her, and everything will be as it used, and you'll say so yourself in the morning. There, now, don't take on so."

Thus honest Jones poured consolation into an inattentive and incredulous ear, and the young lady, answering never a word, wept on for a long time. It was her leave-taking of a dream that could never come again, the hope that her mother might, at last, come to love her.

CHAPTER L. LADY VERNON.

WHEN Maud had closed the door, the bitter smile that had gleamed on her mother's face with a wintry light, departed, and left the bleakest darkness instead.

She remained sitting as in a dream where Maud had left her, with her hands clasped hard together in her lap; she looked down on the carpet, a yard or so before her feet, darkly, and drew her shoulders together, as if a chill air were about her, and shuddered.

How sudden had been the alarm! and now that the danger was upon her, how fast events were driving on!

The tiny ring of the clock over the mantelpiece recalled her. It was twelve o'clock. More than an hour had passed since Maud had left her. It had not appeared five minutes.

She lit her candle, and ascended the great stairs, still in her dream. Without effort, almost without consciousness of motion, she moved like a ghost along the galleries. The homely figure of lean Mrs. Latimer, in her plain black silk dress, startled her like the sight of a stranger.

Lady Vernon did not talk to Latimer that night; she had no questions to ask her. Her veteran maid had never known her so darkly absent before. She told her to leave the two candles on the dressing-table burning, and the maid departed, wondering what had gone wrong, or who had vexed my lady.

Left to herself, Lady Vernon lay still, in that grisly vigilance that in outward seeming simulates the quietude of slumber. Sometimes, for five minutes, her eyes were closed; sometimes wide open for as long. She heard the pulse of the artery in her temple drum on her pillow; and her heart beat harder than a heart at ease is wont to throb.

Lady Vernon had now lain awake in her bed for an hour. She grew hopeless of the rest she felt she wanted. At last she got up, unlocked her dressing-case, and took out one of its pretty cut-glass bottles, with a golden cap over its stopper. It contained that infusion of opium in water, which De Quincy mentions as the fluid approved by those who use that drug on a large scale.

Lady Vernon had recourse to its potent magic only when sleep forsook her, as at present. This of late had happened often enough to cause her to apply to it with increasing doses.

It failed on this occasion; and produced, instead of quiet, exaggerated excitement, as it always does when it fails to soothe.

At length the lady rose, and in her dressing-gown and slippers sat down at her table, and wrote a passionate letter to Captain Vivian, summoning him to Roydon, and promising to open her heart to him if he would come.

This letter written, she again had recourse to the little cut-glass bottle, and this time with success. In a few minutes she lay in a deep, motionless sleep.

In the morning when she awoke the vengeful drug exacted its compensation. She felt almost stunned by the potent medicine.

She had locked the letter in her dressing-box. The first thing in the morning she took it out and read it.

No; it would not do. The glamour of the opium was upon it. She burnt it at the candle that was still flaring at her bedside, pale and smoky, in the early light of morning which she had admitted at the open shutter.

That letter must be very carefully written, she thought; and other measures

must be taken first. It seemed doubtful, altogether, whether it might not be as effectual and wiser to write only to old Mr. Dawe.

She did not come down to breakfast that morning. Maud was infinitely relieved; she dreaded the idea of meeting Lady Vernon; and to her great delight there came a letter from Lady Mardykes, naming the day for receiving her at Carsbrook. It said:

"Your mamma has been so good as to tell Maximilla Medwyn that she will allow you to come to Carsbrook any day you please. If you can, do come on Monday next; Maximilla has promised to be here early, so if you arrive any time in the afternoon you will be sure to find her. I tried to get Ethel Tintern to come; but she can't, she says, for some time. You will find my house very full, and there are some odd, and, I think, very amusing people here. Maximilla tells me that you and she were interested by the rather striking appearance of Doctor Antomarchi. I wrote to ask him for a day or two; so you shall meet him at Carsbrook. He is a wonderful mesmerist. Two young ladies are talking in my room as I write. I hope I am not quite unintelligible in consequence. I hope you like dancing. We dance a great deal here; but you will learn all our ways in a little time."

There was a note from Maximilla Medwyn also, seconding Lady Mardykes' invitation, and promising to be punctually at Carsbrook on the morning of Monday. She mentioned also that she had written to Lady Vernon, and was certain, from what had passed, that she would place no difficulty in the way of Maud's visit to Carsbrook. Of this, however, Maud was by no means so sure.

Lady Vernon did not meet her at luncheon. Maud had gone to the room in secret trepidation. The respite was very welcome; if she could only make her escape to Carsbrook, what a happy change!

She was glad to learn from Jones that Sir David and Lady Blunkett were to dine at Roydon, and stay till next day, and that Mr. and Mrs. Foljambe and Captain Bammie were to meet the worthy baronet and his wife.

She was in hopes of getting away to Carsbrook—if she were indeed to be allowed to visit Lady Mardykes, of which she had very uncomfortable doubts since the scene of the night before—without the agitation of another tête-à-tête with her mother.

She sent for Jones, and ran up to her own room, trembling lest she should meet Lady Vernon on the stairs.

I don't know whether Lady Vernon had any secret shrinkings of a similar kind. If she had she would have disdained them, and played out her game, whatever it was, stoically.

Jones found her young mistress standing at her own window, looking out in an anxious reverie.

"Jones, do you know where mamma is?" Maud asked.

"Her ladyship went down more than an hour ago to the library, and I think she is there still, for it is only about ten minutes since she sent for Mr. Penrhyn to go to her there."

"I'm so afraid of meeting her. I should rather put off seeing her as long as I can. Did Latimer say anything of her having been vexed with me last night?"

"Not a word, miss; I dare say you are making too much of it."

"Not a bit, Jones; but we'll not talk about that. I wish I were sure that she would allow me to go to Lady Mardykes'. You would have great fun there, Jones."

"Well, indeed, miss, a bit o' fun would not hurt neither of us. Her ladyship does keep things awful dull here."

At this moment came a knock at the door.

Miss Vernon looked at Jones, and Jones at Miss Vernon, and there was a rather alarmed silence, during which the knock was repeated.

"Who is there?" asked Maud, after another pause.

It was Latimer.

"Come in, Latimer. Are you looking for me?" said the young lady.

"Please, miss, her ladyship wishes to see you in the library," said Latimer, in her dry way.

"Immediately?" asked Maud, changing colour.

"So she desired me to say, miss."

"Oh, very well, Latimer. Tell mamma, please, that I'll follow you in a moment."

Latimer was gone, and the door shut.

"I wish it was over," said the young lady, very pale. "Stay here, Jones, till I come back."

"I will, miss," said Jones, whose heart misgave her now, respecting the visit to Carsbrook. "And you won't mind me saying, miss, 'twill be best you should not contradict her ladyship in nothing."

"I don't think she'll keep me very long.

When I come back I'll tell you whether we are going or not."

And with these words Miss Vernon left the room, and proceeded along the gallery, and down the stairs, at a much more sedate pace than usual.

It was a very unpleasant excitement, and she felt for a moment almost a little faint as she approached the well-known door.

She hesitated before it. She wondered whether any one was with her mother, and with something nearly amounting to the sinking of panic, anticipated the coming scene.

With an effort of resolution she knocked.

"Come in," said the sweet, cold, commanding voice she knew so well.

Maud entered the room, and drew near with the embarrassment of one who knows not what reception may be awaiting her.

Her large eyes, fixed on Lady Vernon, saw nothing unusual in the serene and cold expression of her handsome face. She heard nothing unusual in her clear, harmonious tones. Her manner was perfectly unembarrassed. Judging by external signs, Maud might have concluded that no recollection of their fiery encounter of the night before remained in her mother's mind.

"There has come a note from Maximilla Medwyn, to-day, telling me that Lady Mardykes wishes you to go to Carsbrook on Monday next. There is nothing to prevent your telling her that you will go."

Maud was afraid to say how delighted and relieved she was. She could not say what untoward caprice too strong an expression of her feeling might excite; but a flush of pleasure glowed brilliantly in her cheeks.

"It is too late to-day for the Roydon post; you can write to-morrow. I have written to Maximilla to say what your answer will be," said Lady Vernon. "Some people are coming to dine here to-day, and I don't think we are likely to be alone while you remain at home. I only wished to mention that; and you had better tell Jones, as she is to go with you; there's nothing more."

"I hope that you are pretty well now, mamma?"

"Quite well, thanks," said Lady Vernon, cutting short any possible prolongation of these civilities. "You remember the story of—Talleyrand, was it? I forget—a Frenchman of the world, who, being bored at every posting-house, through half the journey to Paris, with messages from a gentleman who was travelling the same

road, to inquire particularly how he was, requested the messenger at last to say to the gentleman who was so good as to make so many inquiries, that he was very well all the way to Paris. So we'll take that hint, I think, and save one another some trouble, and I'll say I'm very well all the way to Monday afternoon. And now, dear Maud, I'm busy, and I think I'll say good-bye."

And with this gracious speech, accompanied by a cold little laugh that was indescribably insulting, she turned to her papers once more, leaving Maud to make her exit with a very full and angry heart.

"Always sorry when I try to show her the least sign of affection. Well, while I remain here, I'll not be such a fool again."

So, with flashing eyes, Maud resolved, as she passed from the library through the suite of rooms beyond it.

SLEEPERS AND SOMNAMBULISTS.

SLEEP is nearly as great a puzzle as ever it was. Much has been discovered concerning the bodily peculiarities manifested during this portion of our existence; but all whose opinions are best worth listening to, admit that they are only on the threshold of the subject yet. Why, for instance, can some men maintain their bodily and mental vigour with so small an amount of sleep as falls to their share? Lord Brougham, and many other great statesmen and lawyers, are known to have been content with a marvellously small quantity of sleep. Frederick the Great is said to have allowed himself only five hours; John Hunter, five hours; General Elliot, the hero of Gibraltar, four hours; while Wellington, during the Peninsular War, had still less.

How, on the other hand, to account for the cormorant sleepers? De Moivre, the mathematician, could (though it is to be hoped he did not) sleep twenty hours out of the twenty-four. Quin, the actor, sometimes slept for twenty-four hours at a stretch. Doctor Reid, the metaphysician, could so manage, that one potent meal, followed by one long and sound sleep, would last him for two days. Old Parr slept away his later days almost entirely. In the middle of the last century a young Frenchwoman, at Toulouse, had, for half a year, fits of lengthened sleep, varying from three to thirteen days each. About the same time, a girl, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, slept fourteen weeks without waking; and

the waking process occupied three days to complete. Doctor Blanchet, of Paris, mentions the case of a lady who slept for twenty days together when she was about eighteen years of age, fifty days when she was about twenty, and had nearly a whole year's sleep from Easter Sunday, 1862, till March, 1863; during this long sleep (which physicians call hysteric coma) she was fed with milk and soup, one of her front teeth being extracted to obtain an opening into her mouth. Stow, in his Chronicle, tells us that "The 27th of April, 1546, being Tuesdaie in Easter weeke, W. Foxley, potmaker for the Mint in the Tower of London, fell asleep, and so continued sleeping, and could not be waked with pricking, cramping, or otherwise, till the first day of the next term, which was full fourteen dayes and fifteen nights. The causes of his thus sleeping could not be knowne, tho' the same were diligentlie searched for by the king's physicians and other learned men; yea, the king himselfe examined y^e said W. Foxley, who was in all points found at his waking to be as if he had slept but one night." Another very notable instance was that of Samuel Chilton, of Timsbury, recorded in one of the early volumes of the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society. In the year 1694 he slept for a month, and no one could wake him. Later in the same year he had a four months' sleep, from April the 9th to August the 7th; he woke, dressed, went out into the fields (where he worked as a labourer), and found his companions reaping the corn which he had helped to sow the day before his long nap; it was not till that moment that he knew of his sleep having exceeded the usual duration of a few hours. He went to sleep again on the 17th of August, and did not wake till the 19th of November, notwithstanding the pungent applications of hellebore and sal-ammoniac to his nostrils, and bleeding to the extent of fourteen ounces. He woke, asked for bread and cheese, but went off to sleep again before it could be brought to him, taking another spell of sleep which lasted till the end of January. After this it is not recorded that he had any more of these strange relapses.

There are instances of sleep so intensely deep as to deprive the sleeper of all sense of pain. The records of the Bristol Infirmary present an extraordinary illustration of this. One cold night a tramp lay down near the warmth of a lime-kiln, and went to sleep. One foot must have been

close to the fire-hole of the kiln; for during the night the foot and ankle were so completely burned away, as to leave nothing but black cinder and calcined ash. He did not wake till the kiln-man roused him next morning, nor did he know what had occurred until he looked down at his charred stump. He died in the infirmary a fortnight afterwards.

Those cases in which the brain is hard at work during sleep, instead of being totally oblivious of everything, may be called either dreaming or somnambulism, according to the mode in which the activity displays itself. Many of them are full of interest. Some men have done really hard mental work while asleep. Condorcet finished a train of calculations in his sleep which had much puzzled him during the day. In 1856, a collegian noticed the peculiarities of a fellow-student, who was rather stupid than otherwise during his waking hours, but who got through some excellent work in geometry and algebra during sleep. Condillac and Franklin both worked correctly during some of their sleeping hours.

The work done partakes in many cases more of the nature of imaginative composition than of scientific calculation. Thus, a stanza of excellent verse is in print, which Sir John Herschel is said to have composed while asleep, and to have recollected when he awoke. Goethe often set down on paper, during the day, thoughts and ideas which had presented themselves to him during sleep on the preceding night. A gentleman one night dreamed that he was playing an entirely new game of cards with three friends; when he awoke, the structure and rules of the new game, as created in the dream, came one by one into his memory; and he found them so ingenious that he afterwards frequently played the game. Coleridge is said to have composed his fragment of *Kubla Khan* during sleep. He had one evening been reading Purchas's *Pilgrim*; some of the romantic incidents struck his fancy; he went to sleep, and his busy brain composed *Kubla Khan*. When he awoke in the morning, he wrote out what his mind had invented in sleep, until interrupted by a visitor, with whom he conversed for an hour on business matters; but, alas! he could never again recal the thread of the story, and thus *Kubla Khan* remains a fragment. Doctor Good mentions the case of a gentleman who in his sleep composed an ode in six stanzas, and set it to music. Tartini, the celebrated Italian violinist, one night dreamed that

the devil appeared to him, challenged him to a trial of skill on the fiddle, and played a piece wonderful for its beauty and difficulty; when Tartini woke, he could not remember the exact notes, but he could reproduce the general character of the music, which he did in a composition ever since known as the *Devil's Sonata*. Lord Thurlow, when a youth at college, found himself one evening unable to finish a piece of Latin composition which he had undertaken; he went to bed full of the subject, fell asleep, finished his Latin in his sleep, remembered it next morning, and was complimented on the felicitous form which it presented.

Still more curious, however, are those instances in which the sleeper, after composing or speculating, gets up in a state of somnambulism, writes the words on paper, goes to bed and to sleep again, and knows nothing about it when he wakes. Such cases, the authenticity of which is beyond dispute, point to an activity of muscles as well as of brain, and to a correctness of movement which is marvellous when we consider that the eyes are generally closed under these circumstances. Doctor W. B. Carpenter mentions the case of a somnambulist who sat down and wrote with the utmost regularity and uniformity. "Not only were the lines well written, and at the proper distances, but the i's were dotted and the t's crossed; and in one instance the writer went back half a line to make a correction, crossing off a word, and writing another above it, with as much caution as if he had been guided by vision." The young collegian, adverted to in a former paragraph, got out of bed in his sleep, lit a candle, sat down to a table, wrote his geometry and algebra, extinguished the light, and went to bed again; the lighting of the candle was a mere effect of habit, for his eyes were shut, and he was really not awake. About the beginning of the present century a banker at Amsterdam requested Professor van Swinden to solve for him a calculation of a peculiar and difficult kind. The professor tried it, failed, and submitted it to ten of his pupils as a good mathematical exercise. One of them, after two or three days' work at it, went to bed one night with his mind full of the subject, and fell asleep. On waking in the morning he was astonished to find on his table sheets of paper containing the full working out of the problem in his own handwriting; he had got up in the night and done it, in his sleep and

in the dark. The first French Encyclopédie narrated the case of a young ecclesiastic at Bordeaux who was in the habit of getting out of bed in his sleep, going to a table, taking writing materials, and writing a sermon. He was often watched while doing this, and an opaque screen was cautiously placed between his eyes and the paper; but he wrote on just the same. One example of mental discrimination displayed by him was very remarkable, showing how strangely awake even the reasoning faculties may be during somnambulistic sleep. He wrote the three French words, "ce divin enfant;" then changed "divin" into "adorable;" then recognised that "ce" would not suit before an adjective commencing with a vowel; and finally changed it into "cet." On another occasion the paper on which he was writing was taken away, and another sheet substituted; but he immediately perceived the change. On a third occasion he was writing music, with words underneath. The words were in rather too large a character, insomuch that the respective syllables did not stand under their proper notes. He perceived the error, blotted out the part, and wrote it carefully again; and all this without real vision, such as we ordinarily understand by the term.

The sleep-walkers who go from room to room, and are very busy in a sort of world of their own, without actually composing new music or writing new compositions, are numerous. The Morning Chronicle, in 1822, gave an account of a seaman who slept for a night at an inn in York. Wishing to be called early next morning, and knowing himself to be a heavy sleeper, he directed the chambermaid to come into his room and call him, if he did not hear her knock at the door. Waking when the sun was high in the heavens, he felt certain that he had slept far beyond the proper time; but looking for his watch to know the hour, he found that it was not in its place under the pillow where he had placed it. He jumped out of bed to dress, but his clothes were gone; and looking round, he found himself in a strange room. He rang the bell; the chambermaid appeared, and then he found that he had, at some early hour in the morning, left his bed, and wandered in a somnambulistic sleep into another room; for when the maid came to call him he was not in his proper room. Wienholt relates the case of a student who, when in a somnambulistic state, was wont to leave his bed, go to the parlour or to his

study, take out pen, ink, and paper, place music in its proper position on the piano-forte, and play a whole piece through, with his eyes shut. His friends once turned the music upside-down while he was playing. He somehow detected the change, and replaced the paper in the proper position. On another occasion his ear detected a note out of tune; he tuned the string, and went on again. On a third occasion he wrote a letter to his brother, rational and legible to a certain point; but it was singular to observe that he continued to write after the pen had lost its ink, making all the proper movements without being conscious that he made no more marks on the paper. A case is on record of a young lady who, when under the influence of a particular nervous complaint, would walk about the house in a state of sleep or coma, steering her way safely between the articles of furniture, and even avoiding objects purposely placed to obstruct her path. Her eyes were open, but she evidently did not see through them in the ordinary sense; for she entirely disregarded strong lights held close to her eyes, and even a finger that was actually placed against the eyeball. Physicians are acquainted with many evidences of persons who do not see with the eyes, but have some unexplained kind of vision in certain morbid states of the nervous system.

Those somnambulists who wander about in streets and roads, or (like Amina in Bellini's opera) walk along narrow planks in perilous situations, have the muscular sense, whatever it may be, effectively awake. Doctor Carpenter notices, at some length, "the sleep-walkers who make their way over the roofs of houses, steadily traverse narrow planks, and even clamber precipices; and this they do with far less hesitation than they would do in the waking state." The sense of fear is asleep, whatever else may be awake. Some somnambulists start off while asleep to attend to their regular work, though under very irregular circumstances. Not very many years ago, a working stonemason in Kent was one evening requested by his master to go next morning to a churchyard in the neighbourhood and measure the work which had been done to a wall, in order that an account might be sent in to the churchwardens. The man went to bed at the usual time; but when he awoke he found himself fully dressed, in the open air, and in the dark. Presently a clock struck two, and he knew that he was in the

churchyard. As he found that he had a measuring-rod and a book in his hand, he resolved to walk about till daybreak (it being summer weather), and ascertain what it was that he had really done. He then found that he had measured the wall correctly, and had entered the particulars in his book. Sometimes, instead of starting up from sleep to go to work, persons will fall asleep while working or walking. When Sir John Moore made his famous retreat to Corunna, whole battalions of exhausted troops slumbered as they marched. Muleteers have been known to sleep while guiding their mules, coachmen while driving on the box, post-boys while trotting on their horses, and factory children while at work. There was a rope-maker in Germany who often fell asleep when at work, and either continued his work in a proper way, or uselessly remade cordage already finished. Sometimes when walking long distances he was similarly overtaken with sleep; he went on safely, avoiding horses and carriages, and timber lying in the road. On one occasion he fell asleep just as he got on horseback; yet he went on, rode through a shallow river, allowed his horse to drink, drew up his legs to prevent his feet from being wetted, passed through a crowded market-place, and arrived safely at the house of an acquaintance; his eyes were closed the whole time, and he awoke just after reaching the house. Gassendi describes a case of a man who used to rise in the night, dress himself while asleep, go down to the cellar, draw wine from a cask, and walk back to his bed without stumbling over anything. In the morning, like other sleep-walkers, he knew nothing of what had happened. If he chanced to wake while in the cellar, which once or twice occurred, he groped his way back in the dark with more difficulty than when the sleep was upon him. Another Italian, also mentioned by Gassendi, passed on stilts over a swollen torrent in the night while asleep, then awoke, and was too much afraid to cross until daylight came.

An additional element of interest is presented in those cases in which speaking is concerned, the somnambulist either talking or hearing what is said to him by others. Many writers mention the instance of a young naval officer, who was signal-lieutenant to Lord Hood, when the British fleet was watching Toulon. He sometimes remained on deck eighteen or twenty hours at a time, watching for signals from the other

ships; he would then retire to his cabin, and fall into a sleep so profound that no ordinary voice could wake him; but if the word "signal" was even whispered in his ear, he was roused instantly. Doctor James Gregory cites the case of a young military officer, going with his regiment in a troopship to a foreign station in 1758, who, when asleep, was peculiarly sensitive to the voices of his familiar acquaintances, and powerfully influenced by anything they said to him. Some of the other young officers, ready for any pranks, would lead him on through all the stages of a duel, or of an impending shipwreck, or of a sanguinary battle: each sentence spoken by them turning his dream (if it may be called a dream) into a particular direction; until at length he would start up in imaginary danger, and, perhaps, awake by falling out of his berth or stumbling over a rope. In 1815, public attention was called to the case of a young girl who sometimes fell asleep in the evening, began to talk, imagined herself to be a clergyman, uttered an extempore prayer, sang a hymn much better than she was accustomed to do at church, carried on rational discourse, and knew nothing about it when she woke. One of the somnambulists, of rather sleep-talkers, who have come under the notice of physicians, was a young lady accustomed to talk after she had been asleep an hour or two. If leading questions were put to her by any one in the room, she would narrate all the events of the preceding day; but her mind, sleeping or waking as we may choose to consider it, disregarded all questions or remarks except such as belonged directly to the train of thought. When she awoke she knew nothing of what had occurred. The Times, in 1823, gave an amusing account of the somnambulism of one George Davis, a youth in the service of a butcher in Lambeth. He fell asleep in his chair one Sunday evening; soon afterwards he rose up in his sleep, with his eyes closed, fetched his whip, put on one spur, went to the stable, failed to find the saddle, and got upon the unsaddled horse. Some members of the family, watching him, asked what he was about to do; he answered that he was "going his rounds." With some difficulty they stopped him, but could not stop his train of thought; for he entered into a wrangle with an imaginary turnpike-man for giving him short change, saying, "Let's have none of your gammon!" Although now dismounted, he whipped and spurred vigorously, as if really going his rounds.

In addition to all these curious varieties of partial activity during sleep, whether shown in the forms of walking, talking, working, or thinking, there are others which have engaged the notice of physicians, and which tend to increase the mysterious complexity of the whole affair. For instance, there are false impressions suggested by real facts, and bearing some rude kind of resemblance to them. A man in bed, who had a water-bottle rather too hot against his feet, dreamed that he was walking on the sulphur-lava of Etna; another, who had unknowingly thrown off the bed-clothes in a chilly night, dreamed that he was wintering in the Arctic regions; a third, who had a blister applied to his head, dreamed that he was being scalped by Indians; while a fourth, who was in a damp bed, dreamed that he was being dragged through a stream. The memory plays some strange tricks with sleep-walkers. A military officer, after a hard day of much marching and little eating, was told that there would be some hot soup ready at midnight; he threw himself down to rest, requesting to be called at the supper hour; next morning he knew nothing of the fact that he had really been called, and had really had his share of the soup. The two portions of sleep had been welded together in his mind, and he was not conscious of the interval that had separated them. Doctor Abercrombie notices the case of a woman who carried on a somnambulistic conversation in a remarkable way. She would, when asleep, relate events of the preceding day (like the young lady mentioned in a former paragraph), with this peculiarity: that she repeated everything which she herself had said, but "regularly left intervals in her discourse corresponding to the periods when the other party was supposed to be speaking; and she also left intervals between different conversations, shorter in reality, but corresponding in relative length, to the intervals which had, in fact, taken place." She repeated in her sleep nearly everything which she had uttered during the day, whether good or bad, but left blank spaces of time for everything that had been said to her by other persons. She was scarcely ever known to repeat anything that she had read; the muscular and audible act of speaking was the one thing that reproduced itself in this way—a way likely to be as inconvenient as it was strange. Sleep-walkers avoid accidents wonderfully well, as we have already said, yet not always so. In 1870, the newspapers told of one Job Ed-

wards, a working man at Wolverhampton, who, during a fit of somnambulism, fell out of a third-story window, and was seriously injured. From his known peculiarities, it was inferred that he supposed himself to be getting out of a kitchen window into a back-yard. In this case only a small portion of the man's faculties could have been awake.

THREE ODD LEGENDS OF BERLIN.

"WHEN I reflect upon the superstitious fancies in which our forefathers indulged, and compare them with the vagaries of the so-called spiritualists of the present day, it seems to me that, in one respect at least, the world has not advanced in wisdom. The village ghost, who frightened the peasant, was at any rate supposed to appear for an important purpose—generally for the sake of righting wrong, of protecting innocence, or of punishing crime. The poor old woman, who was laughed at by the free-thinking squire for believing that some defrauded orphan recovered the property from which he had been debarred, through the information generously afforded by some grim lady, who wore extremely rustling silk, might have scoffed in her turn at the manifestation of a departed spirit, who revealed himself to mortal ears merely for the purpose of spelling his name indifferently, with a vast deal of misspent trouble."

Thus spake Laurence, looking amazingly wise. To him, with an approving nod, replied Maximilian: "Quite true; and now we are between four walls, I do not mind confessing that I never entertained that thorough contempt for the apparitions of the old school, which was encouraged, nay, almost enforced, early in the present century. Taught, as I had been, to place faith in a Providence, I never saw how I could consistently reject a narrative as false, merely because it involved the interposition of a supernatural agency."

"Then," sneered Edgar, "you would believe that a story was true, on the strength of the circumstance that it inculcated a good moral? The world, in your opinion, must be very happily constituted."

"You are going too far," remonstrated Laurence; "Maximilian did not mean anything of the kind. He merely intends to assert that we are not so thoroughly acquainted with the economy of the universe, that we have a right absolutely to deny

the possibility of certain phenomena simply because they do not harmonise with the results of our general experience."

"That is the argument of those poor modern spiritualists on whom you look down with such lordly scorn," observed Edgar. "Be consistent at any rate."

"We are perfectly consistent," retorted Maximilian. "We refuse even to investigate the facts offered to our notice by the magi to whom you refer, because the facts are trivial, and in our opinion not worth investigation. However, let me vary this discussion with a narrative which was long current among the people of Berlin."

"A ghost story of the good old school," insinuated Edgar.

"Well," said Maximilian, "it does not in any way refer to a ghost in the ordinary sense of the word; but still it purports to record an instance of supernatural agency, deemed extraordinary in its time. Just at the close of the sixteenth century, when John George was Elector of Brandenburg, three brothers, whose Christian names were Bruno, Michael, and Gotthold, lived in the capital of the present kingdom of Prussia. These brothers were so deeply attached to each other that the emotions experienced by any one of them were almost equally felt by the other two."

"A leash of Corsican brothers," interposed Edgar.

"The youngest brother," proceeded Maximilian, "became desperately enamoured of the daughter of Maestro Rapposi, an Italian, who was the elector's chief Kapellmeister. The maestro lodged in a house belonging to an uncle of the three brothers, and consequently Gotthold had an opportunity of declaring his passion, of which he was not slow to take advantage. His avowal having been heard with favour by the young lady, he lost no time in communicating his good fortune to his brothers, and a consultation was forthwith held as to the best means of obtaining the consent of the father to the union of the lovers. The Italian was very proud of his position, and was not to be approached lightly, and as Bruno, the elder brother, had distinguished himself much by playing on the violin before the elector, and had thus gained the post of second Kapellmeister, he was deemed the most fitting negotiator. Unfortunately, the very deserts of Bruno, on which Gotthold had relied, destroyed his efficiency, for Rapposi saw in the young musician a dangerous rival, and hating him accordingly with a professional hatred, met Bruno's

proposal with a stern declaration that all intercourse between Mademoiselle Rapposi and Gotthold must immediately cease.

"The sight of a public execution," continued Maximilian, "was, in the days of which I am speaking, regarded as a fitting recreation for persons of indubitable respectability, and thus far it was but natural that the Italian maestro and the three brothers found themselves in a dense throng assembled to see the last sentence of the law inflicted on an unfortunate young person, guilty of infanticide. As it happened, they all stood close together, and the attention of the crowd was diverted from the criminal by a loud shriek, followed by the fall of the Italian, who pointed to a knife, which had been plunged up to the hilt into his bosom, and immediately expired. Bruno, who stood nearest to the deceased, was at once arrested on suspicion; and, in spite of his protestations that he had neither struck the blow himself, nor knew in the least who was the assassin, he was speedily sentenced to death. No sooner, however, had the sentence been passed, than each of the remaining two brothers, without communicating together, resolved to save Bruno by an act of self-sacrifice, and accordingly both appeared before the tribunal, each declaring that he was the real murderer. Bruno, to frustrate their generous intentions, belied his former protestations of innocence, and, in his turn, took the crime upon himself. Here, then, was a difficult case, for it was clear that three persons could not have killed a man with one knife, and the perplexed judges referred the case to the elector, who hit upon a curious ordeal as an expedient for ascertaining the truth. He ordered that the three brothers should each carry a lindentree to a certain churchyard, and plant it with its head downwards, adding that the one whose tree did not grow under these difficult circumstances, should be executed as a murderer."

"It seems as though John George meant to exterminate all three, though he went to work in a roundabout fashion," growled Edgar.

"Not at all," objected Maximilian. "The elector was assured that the Providence to whom he appealed would supernaturally interfere to prevent a manifest injustice. He had the simple faith of our ancestors, who believed that the innocent could indicate their innocence by walking over red-hot plough-shares, and events proved that he was not mistaken."

"Granted the truth of the story," interrupted Edgar.

"The brothers," resumed Maximilian, "proceeded to the designated churchyard, accompanied by all the clergy, the magistracy, and many citizens of Berlin, and then, after many prayers had been said, and many hymns had been sung, they planted their trees, which solemn act performed, they returned home, where they were allowed to remain unguarded."

"Some would have used their liberty to quit Berlin with all possible speed," murmured Edgar; "but of course such was not the case with this band of brothers?"

"It was not," said Maximilian, "and results proved that they were right, for the upper branches of the trees all struck root into the earth, and the original roots were transformed into branches, which instead of growing upwards spread horizontally in rich luxuriance. In less than thirty years they overshadowed the churchyard."

"And they are to be seen now?" asked Edgar.

"No, since that time they have perished," answered Maximilian, "but the brothers were ennobled by the elector as Lords of Linden, and bore the effigy of the marvellous trees on their escutcheon. Gotthold married the Italian's daughter."

"But who, after all, killed the maestro?" inquired Edgar.

"Never did I hear a question so prosaic!" ejaculated Laurence.

"The real murderer," said Maximilian, "was never discovered, but it is supposed that the Italian killed himself, on purpose to imperil the life of his rival."

"If the supposition be correct," remarked Edgar, "here is the most wonderful part of the whole story. Never did I hear so strong an instance of a man cutting off his nose, in order to be revenged on his face. And you mean to say you believe all this?"

"Not at all," answered Laurence. "It is beyond our power to prove the recorded facts. But still, Maximilian has given us a case, where a strong reason for supernatural interposition is adduced—a legend which is consistent with itself."

"Such," modestly remarked Maximilian, "was my intention."

"Well, as one good turn deserves another," said Edgar, "I'll give you a story from Berlin, which, at any rate, has the merit of being more probable than yours, and which refers to a fine house, which, I believe, is still in existence. Frederick the

Great, it seems, to reward a certain citizen for valuable services to the state, built him a handsome house, which was decorated with a number of statues. Another citizen, who lived in the immediate vicinity, regarded with an envious eye the favour shown to his neighbour, and put himself at the head of a charitable movement, with the view of gaining a similar prize. This plan proved to a certain extent successful, as the king built a house for him likewise."

"The great king seems to have been very fond of building houses for his subjects," remarked Laurence.

"You have exactly hit on the truth," retorted Edgar. "He wished to decorate his chosen capital with as many handsome edifices as possible, and therefore he readily availed himself of the pretext offered by the two citizens. Well, when the second house was built, completed, and presented to its future occupant, that unpleasant gentleman gave signs of discontent so manifest that they did not escape the notice of the king, who good-humouredly asked him the cause of his dissatisfaction. The explanation was to the effect that the man felt disappointed because his house was not, like his neighbour's, adorned with statues. Frederick promised to remedy the defect, and on the following day an artist received an order to decorate the grumbler's house with calves' heads, to the number of ninety-nine. 'With these,' said the king, 'I trust he will be satisfied. The hundredth calf's head he will furnish himself.' Now there is a story which points a moral, and in which there is nothing incredible at all. Some of the calves' heads, I am told, are still to be seen, though the entire number has been diminished by the operation of time."

"You have not critically examined the evidence upon which the credibility of this story rests?" inquired Maximilian. "You have merely taken it as you find it, actuated by that love of legends which is common to all three of us."

"Precisely," answered Edgar.

"Well, then," said Maximilian, "in the absence of the very strongest testimony in its favour, I must declare that I find your story, free as it is from all reference to the supernatural, quite as incredible as mine. We are called upon to believe that a king, remarkable for his economy, and, moreover, anxious to beautify his city, went to the trouble and expense of setting up ninety-nine ugly ornaments in a conspicuous place,

merely because he wanted to crack an indifferent joke."

"I ought to tell you," said Edgar, somewhat cowed, "that the heads were those not of calves but of sheep. As a symbol of stupidity the calf's head in England answers the purpose of the sheep's head in Germany, and therefore——"

"And therefore you touched up the legend, that the point might not be lost," observed Laurence; "and no doubt it had been touched up by many others before it reached your knowledge. No doubt the originator of the tale was struck by the oddity of the ornaments, and set about inventing a probable cause of their origin."

"It should always be borne in mind," observed Maximilian, "that the monuments with which legends are connected bear very feeble testimony to their truth. The legend professes to account for the monument, but frequently it is the monument that suggested the legend. However, I will tell you another tale from Berlin, the moral purpose of which is much the same as that conveyed by the story of the three brothers. In the time of Frederick William, celebrated as the Great Elector of Brandenburg, that is to say, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, there lived at Berlin a wealthy inn-keeper, with a daughter notable for her beauty, whose hand was sought by Heinrich and Rudolph, two of the elector's body-guard. The damsel preferred Heinrich, who was of a mild, even temper, to Rudolph, whose nature was somewhat stormy; and as the former had ingratiated himself with the inn-keeper by rescuing him from a gang of ruffians, his suit was accepted, and Rudolph retired, internally vowing revenge, and resolving to do mischief at the earliest opportunity. An occasion presented itself, when the betrothed lovers met at a retired spot, and he became a concealed witness of the interview. Inflamed with jealousy, he rushed from his hiding-place as soon as Heinrich had left the spot, thrust his sword into the damsel's bosom, and fled unobserved. Her lifeless body was found soon afterwards, and popular suspicion was divided between the two admirers. On the one hand, Rudolph's disappointment and consequent jealousy were well known; on the other, Heinrich had been the last person seen with the deceased. Both were arrested, but, in accordance with the custom of the age, both were put to the torture, and both protested their innocence. The elector in his perplexity decreed that

each of the parties accused should throw a pair of dice, and that he whose throw was lowest should be deemed guilty of murder."

"Observe the progress of enlightenment in less than a century," exclaimed Edgar. "Our old friend John George, with his inverted linden-trees, was apparently inclined towards the policy of those wise school-masters who, when they could not detect the perpetrator of some mischievous deed, flogged their pupils all round. The great elector, on the other hand, gives somebody a chance of escape, though the luckless thrower may as well be the innocent man as the murderer."

"In both stories the elector," said Maximilian, "is supposed to rely upon Providence, though in one only is miraculous intervention manifestly invoked. The body-guards were all assembled to witness the trial of the dice. For the table stood a drum, near which a coffin was placed, while a reverend gentleman was in attendance to perform the last offices. Rudolph, who began the contest, threw a pair of sixes, and his victory seemed secure. Heinrich, undaunted, implored Heaven to bear witness to his innocence, and, as if in answer to his prayer, one of the dice was split into two pieces, one of which showed a six, and the other an ace, the unbroken die showing a six, and thus making a total of thirteen. Struck by this extraordinary phenomenon, Rudolph at once confessed his guilt, and was sentenced by the elector, not to death, but to perpetual imprisonment."

"The great elector," cried Edgar, "turns out to be better than he promised."

IN A CANOE.

As the sunset dics
I close my eyes,

And see the river winding, winding,
Whither I fled from sunshine blinding,
Bringing with me a mighty folio
And a silver flask of red rosolio,
Threw myself down on the margent cool,
Watched a heron fishing his pool,
Watched the swallows circle and swim.

In my whim

I had forgotten the grand old poet
In his russet coat of Russia leather,
Fragrant with tan of the birch—they grow it
In woods that stretch over leagues together:
From the birch o'erhead I had plucked a bough
To drive away the gnats and midges.
"Ah," I said, "what see I now
Up the stream by the two grey bridges?
Is it a bird so red, so red?"
'Twas the silken snood of a dainty head:

Yes, 'twas you,

Coming down in your gay canoe,
Dainty-sweet and slender-supple,
Beautiful form whose motions couple
The swift and soft. My pulse beats faster,
I will be that maiden's master.

Such my oath :
Is my darling loth ?
Down you came by lawny villa
As the swans led out their young flotilla ;
You made the vision of Thames unstable,
A water-bird from the Realm of Fable,
Perfect in grace of colour and form,
With love and the sunset doubly warm.
As I looked I thought, " Is it only a dream
Of the magic stream ?"
But your paddle splashed, your gay silk rustled,
And the mighty male swan, wild with anger,
Swept through the reeds, your frail craft hustled,
Roused me out of my dreamy languor.
Into the stream I sprang : the bough
Of birch I used and the poet's folio
To fright the swan . . . and you, I vow,
Were glad of a sip of red rosolio.
Poor little child, so faint, so faint !
But we very soon became well acquainted ;
Soon you knew
You had found your fate in your gay canoe.
Not oft, I guess, does the sudden capture
Of a water-bird produce such rapture :
But I felt the glory of life grow vaster
As I became that maiden's master.

PROTECTIVE MIMICRY.

IN our article on Protective Resemblances* we endeavoured to show how useful a special colouring is to many animals, and how easily it is produced by the application of well-known Darwinian laws.

In the present paper we enter upon a new form of protective agency, and have to consider creatures whose colours are marked and conspicuous, and which completely resemble some other creature of a totally different group, while they differ widely in outward appearance from those to which, in structure and organisation, they are in reality most closely allied. This resemblance of one animal to another is of precisely the same essential nature as the resemblance, already noticed, to a leaf or to a dead twig. In the one case the bird will not attack the leaf or twig, and so the disguise is a safeguard ; in the other case, for various reasons, presently to be mentioned, the creature resembled is not attacked by the various enemies of its order, and the creature resembling it has an equal safeguard.

Mr. Bates was the first naturalist who specially devoted his attention to the subject of mimicry in animals, although many observers had noticed individual cases of it. " Mimetic analogies," he observes, " are resemblances in external appearance, shape, and colour, between members of widely distinct families. An idea of what is meant may be formed by supposing a pigeon to

exist with the general figure and plumage of a hawk."

He was led to the consideration of this group of phenomena, by his observations on certain butterflies, inhabiting the forests on the banks of the Amazon. There is an extensive family of these insects, the Heliconidæ, which are almost always more abundant in these regions than any other butterflies. They are distinguished by very elongate wings, body, and antennæ, and are exceedingly beautiful and varied in their colours ; spots, and patches of yellow, red, or pure white, upon a black, blue, or brown ground, being the most general. They fly slowly and weakly, and yet, although they are so conspicuously coloured, and do not conceal themselves during repose, and could so readily be caught by birds, they are apparently safe from all attacks. This immunity is probably due to their possessing a strong, pungent, semi-aromatic or medicinal odour, which pervades all their juices, and would thus render them disgusting to birds, lizards, and other insectivorous animals. In the region where this family of insects is found there are also white butterflies, forming the family Pieridæ (to which our cabbage butterfly belongs), in which is a genus (*Leptalis*), some species of which are white, like their allies, while the majority exactly resemble the Heliconidæ in the form and colouring of the wings, although the two families differ as widely in their structural character as the carnivora and the ruminantia among quadrupeds. Yet the resemblance between a species of the one family with a species of the other family was often so great that Mr. Bates and Mr. Wallace, when they were fellow-travellers in the Amazon valley, were often deceived at the time of capture, and, although experienced entomologists, did not discover the distinctness of the two insects until they made a more complete examination of them. During his eleven years' residence in that region, Mr. Bates found a number of species of *Leptalis*, each of which was a more or less exact copy of one of the Heliconidæ of the district, and the imitation is carried out in a wonderful degree in form as well as in colouring. The wings, the antennæ, and the body of the mimickers have become elongated, so as to correspond with the peculiar and unusual condition in which they exist in the insects they resemble. The different genera of the family of Heliconidæ have special types of colouring. In one genus the wings are of a rich

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. v., p. 469.

semi-transparent brown, banded with black and yellow; in another they are translucent like horn, and with black transverse bands; while in a third the wings are more or less transparent, with black veins and borders, and often with bands of orange-red. All these different forms are mimicked by various species of *Leptalis*, every spot and band, and each degree of transparency, being exactly reproduced. Moreover, to secure all possible protection, the habits of these species of *Leptalis* have undergone modifications simultaneously with their colouring, for they adopt the same mode of flight, and frequent the same spots as their models, and, as the mimickers are very scarce as compared with the group they resemble (probably in the ratio of one to one thousand), there is little chance of their being detected by their enemies.

Precisely corresponding observations have been made in the tropical regions of the Old World. The *Danaidæ* of Africa and Southern Asia, and the *Acræidæ*, common to the tropics generally, are arranged by the highest authorities in the same great group with the *Heliconidæ*, which are found only in South America. The two former families resemble the latter not only in general form, structure, and habits, but in possessing the same protective odour, although they are not so varied in colour. The insects which mimic them belong to one or other of the genera *Papilio* or *Diadema*. Mr. Trimen, in his paper on *Mimetic Analogies among African Butterflies*, published in the *Transactions of the Linnean Society*, for 1868, gives a list of no less than sixteen species of *Diadema* and its allies, and ten of *Papilio*, which in their colour and markings are perfect imitations of species of *Danais* or *Acræa*, which inhabit the same districts.

In India and the Malay Archipelago we have analogous cases of *Papilios* mimicking various species of *Danais* and *Diadema*; and in Mr. Wallace's charming volumes on the natural history of the last-named region there is a remarkable case of one species of *Papilio* mimicking another species of the same genus.

Mimicry occurs almost exclusively in the tropics, where the forms of life are most abundant, especially in so far as the insect world is concerned. Two instances have, however, been observed in the temperate region, namely, one in North America and one in England. It will suffice to notice the latter. There is a very common white moth, a species of *Spilosoma*, which is

always rejected by young turkeys, who feed greedily on hundreds of other moths. Mr. Stainton—to whom we are indebted for our knowledge of this fact—states that he has seen each bird in succession take hold of this moth and throw it down again, as if it were too nasty to eat. Mr. Jenner Weir has also found that this moth is refused by the bullfinch, chaffinch, yellow-hammer, and red-bunting, while the robin only takes it "after much hesitation," which probably means when it is extremely hungry. Hence, while the conspicuous colour of this moth would make it an easy prey, it clearly possesses immunity from attack, probably in consequence of its taste being disagreeable to birds. Now, there is another moth, a species of *Diaphora*, which appears about the same time, and whose female only is white; it is of the same size as that we have been describing, pretty closely resembles it in the dusk, and is much less common. Here, then, we have species of two perfectly different genera acting apparently as models and mimickers.

In all the cases we have yet adduced we have found *Lepidoptera* mimicking other species of the same order which possess an immunity of attack from birds, but there are several instances in which lepidopterous insects assume the external form of bees and wasps, belonging to a perfectly different order, the *Hymenoptera*. The resemblance is often so obvious, as in the case of certain day-flying clear-winged moths, to give rise to such specific names as *apiformis*, *bombiforme*, *vespiforme*, *crabroniforme*, and many others; all indicating a resemblance to hymenopterous insects, as a honey-bee, a humble-bee, a wasp, or a hornet. In this country there are many of these cases of mimicry; and in India there are several species which have the hind legs very broad and extremely hairy, so as exactly to imitate the brush-legged bees which abound in the same country. Although the *Lepidoptera* afford the most obvious and remarkable cases of mimicry, examples of more or less interest are to be found in almost every order of insects. The *Coleoptera* (or beetles) which imitate other beetles of distinct groups, are very numerous in the tropics, where this order is most abundantly distributed. Much as in the case of the *Lepidoptera*, the *Coleoptera* which are imitated always have a special protection, which leads to immunity from attacks by insectivorous birds. Some have a disgusting smell and taste, others have a covering of such stony hardness that they cannot

be crushed or digested; while a third set are very active, and armed with powerful jaws, as well as having some disagreeable secretion.

Many of the soft-winged beetles (Malacoderms) are excessively abundant, and seem to have some special protection (probably a disgusting taste), since many other species often strikingly resemble them. Mr. Wallace mentions cases of various Longicorn beetles in Jamaica, Australia, and the Malay Islands which so successfully mimic different species of Malacoderms "as completely to puzzle the collector on every fresh occasion of capturing them." As further evidence that this group enjoys a special immunity, it may be mentioned that Mr. Jenner Weir, who keeps a variety of small birds, finds that none of them will touch our common "soldiers and sailors." Passing over the numerous other cases, adduced by Mr. Wallace and Mr. Bates, of Coleoptera mimicking other Coleoptera, we shall notice one or two remarkable examples of beetles imitating other insects. There is a South American Longicorn beetle, *Charis melipona*, which receives its specific name from its striking resemblance to a small bee of the genus *Melipona*, the beetle having the thorax and body densely hairy like the bee, and the legs tufted in a manner most unusual amongst the Coleoptera. Another Longicorn discovered by Mr. Bates in the same region has the abdomen banded with yellow, and is altogether so like a small common wasp of the genus *Odynerus* that he was afraid to take it out of his net with his fingers for fear of being stung. It has hence received the name of *Odontocera odyneroides*. Other cases have been observed in which Longicorn beetles resemble sand-flies, ants, and shielded bugs.

Amongst the Orthoptera there is a kind of cricket from the Philippine Islands, which is so exactly like one of the tiger beetles as for a considerable time to deceive so profound an entomologist as Professor Westwood. Both insects run along the trunks of trees, the models being abundant, and the mimickers, as usual, very rare. Mr. Bates has since met with a parallel case in the Amazon region, in which a species of locust mimicked a tiger-beetle, and was found on the same trees that the latter frequented. He likewise found in the same region a species of Mantis which exactly resembled the white ants on which it fed, as well as several species of crickets which were wonderful imitations of dif-

ferent sand-wasps of large size, that provision their nests with these insects.

There are many known cases of Diptera, or (two-winged) Flies, that closely resemble wasps and bees, and are doubtless protected by the resemblance. In South America there are several species of large flies with dark wings and metallic blue elongated bodies resembling the large stinging *Sphegidæ*; and an enormous fly, of the genus *Asilus*, has black-banded wings, and the abdomen tipped with orange, so as exactly to resemble a beautiful bee found in the same region. In our own country there are species of *Bombylius*, a genus of the order Diptera, which are almost exactly like bees. The mimicry here is apparently for a double object, namely, protection and concealment or disguise. There are a number of parasitic flies whose larvæ prey on the larvæ of bees, and most of these flies are exactly like the species of bees on whose grubs they feed, so that they can enter their nests and deposit their eggs without exciting suspicion. There are also bees that mimic other bees for similar unlawful objects. These "cuckoo" bees, which are parasitic on other genera, were found by Mr. Bates in abundance on the Amazon, and "all wore the livery of working bees peculiar to the same country."

In the article on Protective Resemblances reference was made to the preservative agency of colouring in the case of various caterpillars. It is, however, a well-known fact that, in a very large number of cases, these creatures are of bright colours, and often possess markings that render them specially visible. Mr. Wallace has long held the view that birds knew, from experience or instinct, that brilliantly coloured caterpillars were, as in the case of the butterflies and beetles already mentioned, for some reason unfit for food. This view has been, to a great extent, confirmed by the researches of Mr. Jenner Weir, communicated in 1869 to the Entomological Society. He found that a considerable number of insectivorous British birds, which he kept in his aviary, uniformly rejected hairy caterpillars. The spiny larvæ of the Tortoise-shell and Peacock butterflies were equally rejected. In both these cases Mr. Weir thinks that it is the disagreeable taste, and not the hairs or spines, that led to their rejection, because they were similarly avoided in the very young stage, before the hairs or spines were developed. The latter would seem to be the mere signs of uneatableness. Smooth, gaily coloured cater-

pillars, which never conceal themselves, as those of the Magpie moth, the Burnet moth, &c., were then offered to the birds, sometimes alone and sometimes mixed with other larvæ, but in every case they were left unnoticed. The last set of experiments was made on dull-coloured and protected larvæ, and it was found that "all caterpillars whose habits are nocturnal, which are dull-coloured, with fleshy bodies and smooth skins, are eaten with the greatest avidity; every species of green caterpillar is also much relished, and larvæ, resembling twigs as they stand out from the plant, are invariably eaten." Mr. Butler, of the British Museum, has shown that lizards, frogs, and spiders have exactly the same likes and dislikes as Mr. Weir's little birds. Lizards, that would fight with and finally devour humble-bees and frogs, which would catch the bees flying over their heads, and swallow them regardless of their stings, would always drop with disgust one of the objectionable caterpillars, although they frequently seized them, as it were, by accident. Hence, as a general rule, gaudily coloured caterpillars are protected by an agency which renders mimicry in their case unnecessary, and yet, strangely enough, the most extraordinary instance of imitation Mr. Bates ever met with occurred in one of these creatures inhabiting the Amazon valley. "A very large caterpillar," he observes, "stretched itself from amidst the foliage of a tree which I was one day examining, and startled me by its resemblance to a small snake. The first three segments behind the head were dilatable at the will of the insect, and had on each side a large black pupillated spot, which resembled the eye of the reptile; it was a poisonous or viperine species mimicked, and not an innocuous or colubrine snake. This was proved by the imitation of the keeled scales on the crown, which was produced by the recumbent feet as the caterpillar threw itself backwards. I carried it off, and alarmed every one in the village to whom I showed it. It unfortunately died before reaching the adult state."

In the Arachnidans, or spiders, a few cases of mimicry have been observed by Mr. Bates in his explorations of the Amazon valley. He describes a genus of small spiders, which feed on ants, and are exactly like the prey on which they live, and states that some are exactly like flower-buds, and take their station in the axils of leaves, where they remain motionless, waiting for the approach of their victims.

Our cases of mimicry are now drawing

to a close, as we approach the vertebrate sub-kingdom. While in the animals we have hitherto examined (insects and spiders) almost any amount of change of form and appearance may take place without any essential internal modifications; in the vertebrata, on the other hand, the outer form is almost entirely dependent on the internal skeleton; it cannot be rapidly modified by variation, nor does the thin and flexible integument admit of the development of such marvellous protuberances, as are often seen in insects. Moreover, the number of species of each group in the same country is always comparatively small, and the chances of a first accidental variation in the right direction are much diminished. In one group of the vertebrata, the snakes, there is, however, such general similarity of form that a very slight modification, if accompanied by identity of colour, would produce the necessary degree of resemblance. In tropical America there are many species of the numerous genus *Elops*, which are ornamented with certain brilliant colours in a manner not exhibited by snakes in any other part of the world. The ground colour is of a bright red, on which are black bands of various breadths, and sometimes divided into two or three by yellow rings. In the same country can be found several genera of harmless snakes, having no affinity with the genus *Elops*, but coloured exactly the same. There are at least three species of *Elops* which are thus closely imitated by harmless snakes, living in the same localities. And, what makes the case still stranger, there is in South America another perfectly distinct genus of snakes, *Oxyropus*, doubtfully venomous, which has the same curious distribution of colours (namely, variously arranged rings of yellow and black on a red ground), and which inhabit the same districts. In all these cases no one but a naturalist could discover which was a harmless and which a poisonous species, their size, form, and colour being so much alike.

Mr. Wallace regards many of the small Tree-frogs as true mimickers. In the course of his explorations in the tropics he has often been unable at first sight to distinguish them from beetles and other insects sitting upon leaves.

In birds, in addition to various cases of imperfect mimicry, such as the resemblance of the cuckoos—a weak and defenceless group—to hawks, there are in tropical regions a few known cases of mimicry as

perfect as those which are presented by insects. In Australia and the Moluccas there is a genus of honey-suckers called *Tropidorhynchus*, good sized birds, very strong and active, having powerful grasping claws, and long, curved, sharp beaks. They assemble together in groups and small flocks, and they have a very loud hawling note, which can be heard at a great distance, and serves to collect a large number together in time of danger. They are very plentiful and very pugnacious, frequently driving away crows and even hawks. They are all of rather dull and obscure colours. Now in the same countries there is a group of orioles, forming the genus *Mimeta*, much weaker birds, which have lost the gay colouring of their allies, the golden orioles, being usually olive-green or brown; and in several cases these most curiously resemble the *Tropidorhynchus* of the same island. In the island of Bouru there is a species of honey-sucker which is so closely imitated by a species of oriole, that on a superficial examination the birds appear identical, although they have important structural differences, and cannot be placed near each other in any natural arrangement. In the island of Ceram there are allied species of both genera, in which the imitation is equally complete, and in two other islands, Timor and Morty, there is an approximation in species of the two genera towards mimicry, although it is not so perfect as in the preceding cases. In three of these four cases the pairs that resemble each other are found together in the same island, to which they are peculiar. In all four cases the honey-sucker is rather larger than the oriole, but the difference is not beyond what occurs normally in the variation in species, and the two genera are somewhat alike in form and proportion. It is obviously to the advantage of the weak oriole to be mistaken for a strong, pugnacious honey-sucker, who can soon collect its allies by its noisy outcries.

In the neighbourhood of Rio Janeiro is an insect-eating hawk, a *Harpagus*, and a bird-eating hawk, an *Accipiter*, which closely resembles it. Both, says Mr. Salvin, who was the first to notice this instance of mimicry, are of the same ashy tint beneath, with the thighs and under wing-coverts reddish brown, so that when on the wing, and seen from below, they are undistinguishable. The *Accipiter* has, however, a far wider range than the *Harpagus*, and in the region where the former alone occurs, the resemblance ceases, the under wing-coverts varying to white. From this ob-

servation it would seem that the *Accipiter* assumes the red-brown colour, with the view of being mistaken for the insect-eating *Harpagus*, of which birds are not afraid, and throws off its disguise when it can no longer be of service.

Amongst mammals there is only one known case of true mimicry, and for our acquaintance with it we have again to acknowledge our obligations to Mr. Wallace. In the course of his researches into the natural history of the Malay Archipelago, he met with an insectivorous genus, *Cladobates*, of which several species very closely resemble squirrels. "The size is about the same, the long bushy tail is carried in the same way, and the colours are very similar. In this case the use of the resemblance must be to enable the *Cladobates* to approach the insects or small birds on which it feeds, under the disguise of the harmless, fruit-eating squirrel."

As our chief object has been rather to lay before our readers the most remarkable phenomena of mimicry than to theorise on the causes inducing it, we have little left to add to this article. It is sufficient here to remark that while, until lately, the resemblances we have been describing were regarded as accidental, or as instances of the "curious analogies" in nature which must be wondered at, but could not be explained, they have recently multiplied to such an enormous extent as to force themselves on the attention of naturalists, and, as the nature of the resemblances has been more carefully studied, it has been found that they are often carried out into such minute details as almost to imply a purpose of deceiving the observer. We are indebted to the patient researches of Mr. Wallace for the discovery of certain definite laws or conclusions that all these phenomena seem regularly to follow, which again all indicate their dependence on the more general law of the Survival of the Fittest, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life. These laws, which will in future be probably known as Wallace's Laws of Mimicry, have, as we think our readers will admit, a firm foundation on the accumulated facts that have been adduced in the preceding pages.

The first law is, that almost without exception the animals (or the groups) which resemble each other inhabit the same country, and the same districts, and in most cases are to be found together on the very same spot.

The second law is, that these resemblances are not indiscriminate, but that the animals

resembled are limited to certain groups, which in every case are abundant in species and individuals, and can usually be found to have some special protection.

The third law is, that the species which resemble or "mimic" these dominant groups are comparatively less abundant in individuals, and are often very rare.

When the natural history of the tropics shall have been further studied on the spot by future observers, with a full appreciation of what has been already done in this department, we cannot doubt that marvellous discoveries will be made. "The varied ways," says Mr. Wallace, "in which the colouring and form of animals serve for their protection, their strange disguises as vegetable or mineral substances, their wonderful mimicry of other beings, offer an almost unworked and inexhaustible field of discovery for the zoologist, and will assuredly throw much light on the laws and conditions which have resulted in the wonderful variety of colour, shade, and marking which constitutes one of the most pleasing characteristics of the animal world, but the immediate causes of which it has hitherto been most difficult to explain."

TWO SIDES OF A STORY.

NED'S FIRST CHAPTER. OUR COURTSHIP.

IN sketching this little history, I do not reveal my own name, but my wife shall be called Gretchen, her own sweet name which she brought with her from Germany.

I was eighteen years old when I first knew Gretchen, and my position in the world was curious enough. I was an engraver's apprentice, and working might and main for independence. I had been brought up on the charity of a whimsical relative, to whose memory I am grateful, though his oddities caused to some extent the trouble of after years. He had a fine house at the West-end of London, where he lived with great magnificence. He had neither wife nor child, and the thing that he hated worst in the world was a woman. When I was quite a little child he used to stand me between his knees, and make me promise never to marry. He had married himself, and evil had come of it. At five years old I had vowed to lead a single life.

He kept me at a good school till I was sixteen years of age. During all this time he used to invite me often to spend a Sunday with him. His Sundays he spent in retirement, and we dined tête-à-tête. He was a hard old cynic, and he amused himself by startling my young simplicity with

his stories of the world. When I had reached my sixteenth year he found that I was an idle young scapegrace, and had robbed him long enough. It was high time I was learning how to earn my bread. I unfolded to him eagerly my dear wish to be an artist. But he pooch-pooched all that, yet compromised the matter, and apprenticed me to an engraver.

He allowed me so much a week until such a time as I might find myself clever enough to earn my own support. I had nothing to spare for idleness, but I never lacked a meal. I had a humble lodging, and a second suit of clothes. I had a shelf stocked with books, picked up from time to time at the book-stalls, chiefly of art and history, besides a goodly group of the poets. At evening, when, with my day's work done, I conned one of these over my fire, there was not a happier lad in all her Majesty's dominions. My days, too, were pleasant, for my work was congenial, though it was not all that I aspired to. I liked my master, an enthusiast in his art, a good master to me, and a gentle companion. We sat in a crooked room, at the top of a high house, in one of the narrowest streets in the heart of London. We had one window, which, though never opened, commanded a view of many chimney-pots. We had a stove, and a table, and a cupboard, and some benches. It was a bare little workshop; but I peer back into its corners with reverence and love, for it was there I first met Gretchen.

She came with her father one November day. I remember distinctly how angry I felt when I saw a woman in the room. She was all covered up in a black cloak and bonnet, and she hung back behind her father, so that I could not see her face. I did not want to see it, and bit my lips with annoyance as I bent over my work, and heard the audacious errand on which the visitors were come. Nevertheless, my master listened to the request of these intruders, and, after some hesitation, agreed to their proposal. From that day forth there were to be two pupils instead of one in our workroom.

Next morning I came in bad humour to my work. I looked askance at the chair placed between mine and my master's, thinking discontentedly that now our pleasant conversations were at an end. When I heard the stranger coming, I would not raise my eyes. My master greeted her kindly, and showed her a peg in the cupboard where she might hang her cloak and bonnet. She was coming out of the shadows

of the corner when I looked up. I saw a tender, pale, child-like face, with a sweet, weary mouth, and large white eyelids drooping as if with the weight of habitual patience. She had a supple little figure, clad in a russet-coloured gown of the plainest material. There was a strange, unconscious expression of sorrow in the whole air of the young creature, and yet there was a natural radiance about her which assured me that a smile could make her shine like a sunbeam. A heap of smooth gold hair lay above her white brows, and two thick gold braids half covered her ears. Her lips, though somewhat bleached, had a soft touch of vermilion just where they parted, and her cheeks were so fair and dimpled, that it seemed as if some momentary fear must have driven the laugh and rose-tinge out of her face.

My dislike seemed to die a sudden death when I saw Gretchen coming toward me out of the corner. I no longer grudged her the seat between me and my master, nor did I feel that there must be an end of all pleasant conversation. I felt eager to talk, and to make my master talk, so that she might be led to forget her shyness, and to listen and speak. She listened very readily, and in time she spoke. The winter days fled swiftly while Gretchen's true self became slowly revealed to the knowledge of us, her friends. Gradually the genial nature threw off the cloud of reserve and depression that had obscured it. Day by day a little less of the shadow came with her face to our busy table, and the happy soul within her shone more fearlessly in her eyes. And at last Gretchen appeared before us, in the true and vivid colours with which Nature had illumined her.

She was but sixteen, and I eighteen. We were girl and boy, though I had a man's ambition, and she had all the cares of a woman upon her shoulders. Being daily companions, we soon became friends. She talked to me freely about everything but her home, yet I did not notice this, being content that she seemed happy in our workroom. She was an apt pupil, and her delicate work made me ashamed of my more clumsy fingers. We had many a merry joke over this, and many a conference as to the ways and means by which I was to win fame as an artist. I no longer thought it an odd thing that my master should take a girl as an apprentice. We felt the comfort of her presence in more ways than one. If she came to work ten minutes earlier than usual in the morning, she would spend the time of waiting in

making the ragged room more pleasant for the day. The fire was made bright, and the hearth was swept clean, and waste paper made away with, and books put in their places. Our mid-day cup of tea was prepared with a careful hand.

Her love of the beautiful was as ardent as my own, and her feminine way of viewing things had a delightful charm of novelty to me. She was distrustful of herself, and liked being led, but her fancy was so rich, and her taste so perfect, that it was delightful to teach her, and helpful to learn with her. I think we two young things were as happy in our workroom, as it is possible for mere mortals to be. In spite of our meagre surroundings, we lived in a charmed atmosphere. Scraps of pictures were always floating round us, and things of beauty, finished and unfinished, always passing through our hands. Our master impressed upon Gretchen the assurance that she had ability to do well in course of time at the work which she had undertaken, if only she would be patient and persevered to the end. Patient! It seemed an absurdity to talk to Gretchen about patience. Her steady blue eye was brimming full of it. It lay firm at the foundation of her nature. But perseverance? Even I owned to myself with sorrow that in this might Gretchen fail. For there were times when she was restless and nervous over her work, and days when she stayed away, and other days when she begged hard for a little work to do at home, so that she might have an excuse for staying away from the workroom. It is true that she had always a reason for such irregularity—her father was not well, or her sisters were in need of her. But I knew little of home life, and looked upon these reasons as mere excuses. These were the only occasions on which I was angry at our Gretchen, and I wondered at our master that he tolerated this fault. But my master was wiser than I, and though not so absorbed in worship of Gretchen as was his pupil, he had far more penetration as to her difficulties.

It had never occurred to me to think of Gretchen in her home. I knew so little of natural ties that my mind never pictured to me the scenes of family life. She was our Gretchen, and her place was in our workroom. Anything that took her from it must be wrong in the extreme; any one who disputed our right to her must be impertinent. It was my master who first lifted for me a corner of the veil that hid Gretchen's other life.

One day she absented herself according to arrangement, and when the next morning came, again she did not appear. I sulked all day. My master, too, was unusually silent. He was busy over some delicate work, but when darkness began to come on, he laid it aside and spoke.

"Lance," he said, "I am uneasy about our little friend Gretchen."

"Uneasy about her!" I said, prepared to defend her if he accused her of idleness, as I almost expected he must do.

"Yes; I fear her father is a scamp. And she has two sisters to battle with the world for. Somebody must be ill, I think, or she would not stay away from us two days running."

I dropped my graver, and sat gazing at my master. Stupid that I was, such an idea as this had never entered my mind. Gretchen in trouble in some unknown corner of London! Gretchen's father a scamp! Who then was there to protect her? And she had been sitting beside me all these months and I had not been aware of it.

"Her father!" I stammered. I remembered the tall, showily dressed, rather shabby-looking man who had brought her to our place.

"Yes, I have heard something about him by the merest chance. I have heard him spoken of as having had to fly from Homburg, where he lived by the gaming-table. What he is doing in London I do not know. I believe there is no mother. Is the girl always silent as to her family affairs?"

"Always to me," I said, and relapsed into bitter silence.

"After all there may be nothing wrong, and she may be with us to-morrow," were my master's last words to me as we parted in the Strand going home that evening. I spent a restless night. My books were all stupid. My fire would not burn, and the rain drifted drearily on my windows. In the morning I could scarcely eat my breakfast for impatience, and set out towards the workroom an hour earlier than usual. I could not get in so early, and walked about the streets, scowling at every tall man who had an air like Gretchen's father. In the end I was rather late arriving to work, and running up our narrow stairs nearly stumbled over Gretchen.

I did not rush at her with questions as I longed to do, but I said, "Oh, you have come back!" and drew a long breath of relief. Her father had not been well, but was better; and she was sorry to say there

was very little done of the work she had had at home.

After this there seemed to me to be two Gretchens, the happy one who sat between us every day, and the other about whom there was a mystery of trouble. I began to notice sometimes a cloud on her face when she arrived in the mornings, an air of sorrowful quiet, which gradually wore away as the beloved occupation engaged all her attention. Her pleasant laugh and word grew more rare. I tried to think at first that I only fancied this, because my thoughts were always running in the track which had been opened to them by my master's remarks. When Gretchen said good-night to me in the Strand of an evening, I often followed her for a mile or more on her way, keeping the little black bonnet in view. It then seemed to me that she was travelling away into a land of mist and trouble into which I dared not track her. I returned to my own lodging and laid plans all night for the discovery and destruction of her special grief or care. I often went to work in the morning resolved to gain some information as to her life at home. But I feared to give her pain. There was a delicate pride about her which I could not bear to hurt. And in spite of her friendliness I was daunted by the fear that she might not think me sufficiently privileged to be taken into confidence, or allowed to offer help.

I knew that her home was a cottage in some east-lying suburb. A feeling of honour prevented me from following her to the place. But, towards the spring, I cheated myself into thinking that it was rational I should wish for a longer walk in my evenings and my mornings. Eastern air would be good for a certain restlessness which now worried me, so I left my lodging and settled myself in the neighbourhood of Gretchen's cottage. When I told Gretchen of the change she coloured and looked troubled. And this vexed me. And for some time I carefully avoided meeting her, or even passing by her home.

One day no Gretchen arrived at the workroom. I had noticed her looking downcast for some days past, and armed with a message from our master I set out to seek for her in her cottage. I found it a very little house, and very poor and dreary-looking. It was early in the morning, before my walk to town. I was taken for the milkman, and Gretchen opened the door. She was in a very shabby old gown, not the pretty russet one which she wore in the workroom, and she wore a coarse apron,

and her sleeves were rolled up above her pretty pink elbows. Her face burned up with confusion when she saw me, but it quickly paled again, and she regained her self-possession.

"Oh, Mr. Lance, I am so sorry for staying away. Is Mr. Jackson displeased?"

"No, not displeased; but he is anxious about you. He feared you might be sick."

"No, not I. But we have sickness. Won't you come in?" She gave the invitation reluctantly, and I felt that perhaps I ought not to go in. But I was eager to know whether I could help her or not.

It was a sad little room into which she ushered me, with a pinched look of poverty about it, in spite of darns and patches and much cleanliness. There was some fire, however, and a great deal of neatness. At one end of the room an old sofa had been turned into a temporary bed.

"Fan has met with an accident," said Gretchen, as a little figure stirred on the couch. My eyes having got used to the shaded light, I saw a small bandaged head, and one half of a very lovely little face.

"Who is it, Gretchen?" asked a soft young voice, with a note in it like the music of a reed. "If it's the taxman you mustn't let him in. If Kitty were here she would frighten him away."

"Hush, darling! It is not the taxman. It is my friend Mr. Lance."

"Is it? I am so glad. Ah! dear old Gretchen, can you not let me see him?"

"I don't know, darling. I am so afraid of hurting you."

She shifted the bandage very gently, so that one velvet-like brown eye became free. A drop of blood trickled from the forehead, and dropped down the cheek. Gretchen shuddered as she wiped it away, and her cheeks grew a shade paler.

The little one fixed that one bright eye on me, and caught my hand in hers.

"I am glad you have come," she said. "I have been watching for you so long. You have stopped away till you are quite a grown man. Gretchen told us at first that you were a boy."

The door was here pushed open, and another young girl came in. She was as tall as Gretchen, and looked almost as old. She was wonderfully pretty and brilliant, but somewhat hard and defiant-looking.

"This is Mr. Lance, Kitty," said Gretchen.

"Always glad to see a friend," said Kitty, dashing off her bonnet. "They are very rare here."

I was a little disconcerted by her off-hand manner; but I said to the effect that

I was sorry to find that her sister had met with an accident.

"Oh!" cried Kitty, "there was no accident at all. It was father who knocked her down."

"Kitty, Kitty!" cried the little one from the bed.

"Oh, Kitty!" cried Gretchen, sinking her head with a sob of shame upon Fan's pillow.

"There, there, Gretchen! Don't make a scene!" said Kitty, unabashed. "What's the use of pretending? If Mr. Lance comes here often he'll see plenty of it; and if he don't come often he had better have stayed away. Chance visitors do us no good that I could ever see. Cheer up now, Gretchen! If father don't do anything for us there are other folks that will. Lady Bernard gave me that, and we'll have meat for our dinner!"

And Kitty flung a half-sovereign into her sister's lap. I thought at the time that it might be payment for work. But later I heard more of Lady Bernard.

The money slipped off Gretchen's lap, and rolled away into a corner. Gretchen raised her head again, and looked up, so crushed and ashamed that my heart ached for her. She put her hand in little Fan's, and looked me piteously in the face.

"Don't mind Kitty, please," she said; "she means no harm. And it was an accident all the same. Father did not do it intentionally."

Kitty tossed her head, and glanced at her elder sister with scorn and pity.

"That's you, Gretchen!" she cried. "Keep up a fair appearance, and suffer, suffer, suffer, till the flesh drops off your bones! That's your way we know, and you are teaching it to Fan; but I tell you very plainly that it's not going to be mine. And what's more, if you stick to it we'll all be in the graveyard before a year. At least I may be able to make some slight shift for myself; but I don't see anything better for you and Fan."

"Oh, Kitty!" moaned poor Gretchen. "Oh, Kitty, Mr. Lance!"

"Bother Mr. Lance!" cried the outspoken Kitty. "If he can't bear to hear of it, then we don't want to see him. If it's good enough for us to bear with every day, it won't kill him just to know of it. However, I don't want to tease you, so I'll go and buy the dinner."

And Kitty picked her half-sovereign out of the corner where it lay, and tied on her bonnet again, and was gone.

I turned as she disappeared and caught that bright brown eye of Fan's fixed

eagerly on my face. Gretchen was weeping silently by the bedside.

"Little Fan," I said, "you must comfort your sister. Kitty has been very naughty, and has vexed her."

"No," said Fan, thoughtfully, "Kitty does not mean to be naughty. She has not got kind ways; but she can't help it."

"Why be ashamed of poverty?" I said to Gretchen, as she dried away her tears, and looked ready to be talked to. "I am poor. More than half the world is poor."

"Oh, I am not ashamed of it," she said, brightening, as I could see, because I had passed over the deeper agony of her father's ill-conduct. "It is not our fault, and we get along somehow. Father has not much for us, and girls need a great deal. But by-and-bye I shall be able to earn something respectable. And we shall have a better home, and Fan will go to school."

I left her that morning, promising to bring her some work which she might do at home. I could easily understand that with such a father, and with only Kitty to leave as mistress of the house, poor Gretchen must quit her home with an uneasy heart. I became a frequent visitor at the cottage, early in the mornings, when the father was not to be seen. I dreaded meeting him, and it was long before I ventured to come in the evening. It was enough that I was able to be useful to the three little sisters. With Kitty's aid I did many a little service which else I could not have accomplished. For there was soon a good understanding between me and Miss Kitty. Kitty knew from the first that I wished to help; and I knew as well that Kitty only valued me in proportion to the help I was able to give.

After a time Gretchen was able to return to her work, and Fan went about looking as pale as a spirit, and with a scar on her brow. The spring evenings were getting long and clear, and instead of poring over my books and fire, I was fond of wandering about the roads, not feeling ready for sleep until I had passed Gretchen's cottage some half-dozen times, and gazed at the lighted windows, and seen the shadows on the blinds. More than once I had seen the father stagger across the little threshold which was so sacred in my eyes. Many a time I felt inclined to fly at the wretch's throat, and punish him for his iniquity. But after all he was Gretchen's father.

I used to lean on the little gate, holding my breath intently, and listening for cries. Once I fancied I heard weeping, but the wind was sighing through the newly-

budding poplars down the road; and I could not be certain. I walked up and down before the cottage all that night. I used to think that if he ever hurt Gretchen I would kill him.

In the mean time Gretchen kept pretty steadily to her work, and we should have had happy days in the workroom, had it not been for the scene that lay in the background of our thoughts. I fancied now that I could read Gretchen's face, that I could know when the trouble at night had been very heavy, or when a special fear was hanging over her.

One night there was a full moon, round and clear, and a sort of hushed expectation of the summer that was coming was hanging about the half-clad hedges and trees, and floating in the air with the breath of the fresh, yielding earth, whose bosom teemed with flowers that had not yet seen the light. There was an air of exceeding peace and promise about the night. I strolled down the road, and passed Gretchen's cottage. All there was still. After lingering a little about the gate I turned up the road, on the way towards London.

There was a tavern on the roadside, about a mile from the cottage, just where the road became a street, and wandered away and lost itself in the city. I had often passed it when coming home by this way of an evening, and seen idlers crowding into it, and lounging about its doors. It was by this time very late at night, yet the blood-red lantern still burned over the door, and a knot of disreputable-looking characters still clustered under its glare. While some distance away I saw a very young girl go up to this group and scan the faces timidly, then slip through the crowd into the bar. "What a place!" I thought, "for such a girl, at such an hour!" And I was sorry that I had seen her. For Gretchen had made me pitiful towards all lonely girls.

I waited at some distance to see her come out. It was high time for me to turn back and go home to my bed, but I felt a lively curiosity as to the timid-looking young girl who had passed into the tavern at such an hour of the night. Yet what was it to me? She was probably some daughter, or servant of the house. I could not account to myself for my anxiety on the subject, except that she had just been Gretchen's height, and had something of Gretchen's air. Great Heavens! a horrible idea came rushing across my mind. Could it be Gretchen?

I hurried up to the spot, and made my way with difficulty through the brawlers at

the door. There was light flaring brilliantly within, and three men, half intoxicated, were jabbering, and gesticulating, and quarrelling at a counter. At the other side of the place a man was lying, totally unconscious, upon a bench. And Gretchen, with her bonnet falling off, and her golden head gleaming in the wicked flare of the gas, with the tears gathered thick under her innocent eyelids, had got one arm round his neck, and with the other was dragging urgently at his hand. A bold, frowzy-looking woman, evidently just wakened out of a nap, was leaning on her elbows, and watching the scene, with indifference, out of her half-shut eyes.

"You'd better hurry him out of this, young miss," she said, "for it's coming on shutting time, and we ain't a going to be fined for such as he."

The poor child lifted up her face despairingly, and her lips parted as if to make some appeal.

"Gretchen!" I said, coming behind her. "Good Heavens, Gretchen! run home, and leave the rest to me."

She looked up with a great start and a sigh of relief. Never had I seen such a look of mingled joy and shame as quivered on her face when she saw me standing by her.

"Do what I bid you," I added, almost sternly, for it was horrible to see her there, with those tipsy men staring at her. She turned and fled away without speaking a word. And for the moment I felt a rapture which I can yet recal, finding myself so trusted, so obeyed.

It was a hard task, even to me, to bring the unconscious man home. I hailed a passing cart, a cart going for hay out away into the sweet country, and gave the man some money for leave for Reginald Fairfax to lie across the planks, like a stricken bullock, till his cottage was reached, where Gretchen stood waiting at the door. He was laid down at his threshold, and the horses trotted off again countrywards in search of a wholesomer burden. And there we stood, in the fair moonlight of the fresh spring night, Gretchen and I, with the creature that was unhappily her father, lying prone between us, a loathsome human shape, senseless and helpless.

The younger girls were luckily in bed. "Show me his room," I said to Gretchen, "and do you go away to the children till I come back again."

Once more she obeyed me without ques-

tion, and I tasked all my strength to take the huge man in my arms, and drag him up the stairs. It was more than I could do, for, after all, I was but a stripping. At a turn in the narrow staircase I was obliged to call for Gretchen to come and help me. She came, trembling, but helpful and quiet. We got him placed on his bed, and returned together down to the sad little daily room below.

And now I must go and leave her alone in this lonely house, with only the sleeping children, and that dreadful man up-stairs! I took both her hands, and gazed yearningly in her sweet scared eyes. She burst into wild weeping, not loud, but frantic. All her pent-up agonies were set free unawares. She shuddered, and moaned, and clung to my clasping arm. Her terror and misery let loose all my love and passionate longing.

"Listen to me, my love," I said; "look up, and listen to me. You are not to be afraid nor ashamed of anything while I live. And you are not to grieve too much, or you will break my heart. I love you, Gretchen, and I have nothing in the wide world to love besides you. Gretchen, I will ask you by-and-bye to be my wife. Could you be happy with me?"

Her sobs suddenly ceased, and she became quite still. After a minute's waiting I raised the golden head that was bowed upon my arm, and turned up the tearful face and kissed it.

"Say you love me, Gretchen."

"I do," she said, simply, and hid her face again.

"God bless you, my darling. Now we are plighted, are we not?"

She raised her head again. "But——" she began, eagerly.

"I will listen to no buts," I said. "I know what you would say. Remember how young we are. Seventeen and nineteen can afford to wait."

Thus, after all, with our youth and our love, we wrought magic, and turned misery into joy. I was happier than any monarch, walking homeward in the moonlight of that fair spring night. *44 P.*

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LI. DOCTOR MALKIN CONFERS.

ABOUT two hours later, Maud was walking beyond the avenue, in that part of the grounds in which, some weeks before, Miss Max and old Mr. Dawe had taken a little ramble together.

Suddenly she lighted on Doctor Malkin, who was walking up the wooded path from the village. Maud saw that the quick eye of the doctor had seen her at the same moment that she saw him. He happened to be in a part of the path which makes its way through a very shadowy bit of wood, and possibly the doctor thought that he might have been unobserved, for he hesitated for a second, and she fancied was about to evade the meeting by stepping quickly among the trees. But it was only a momentary thought, for he would not of course allow the young lady to suppose that he shrank from a recognition. So, pretending to look up for a moment among the boughs of the tree under which he stood, in search of a bird or a squirrel, or some other animated illustration of that natural history which was one of his studies, he resumed his walk toward her, affecting not to see her until he had approached more nearly; then raising his hat, with a surprised smile and a deferential inclination, he quickened his pace, and, as he reached her, observed on the weather and the beauty of the tints beginning to discolour the summer foliage, and then mentioned that he fancied he saw a kite, whose scientific name he also mentioned, among the boughs of a very dark tree, a little way off, but he was not quite sure. She was taking a rather solitary walk, he observed; how very much she must miss her com-

panion in so many pleasant rambles—Miss Medwyn. What a charming old lady she is, so agreeable, and such exhilarating spirits!

There was a sort of effort and embarrassment in all this that was indefinable and unpleasant. If he had been half detected in a poaching expedition to snare the rabbits, or on any other lawless design, he could scarcely have looked more really disconcerted, and more anxious to appear at his ease.

The doctor appeared to be made up for a journey; he had a rug and a muffler for the night air, still five or six hours away, across his arm, and carried his thin umbrella, in its black shining case, in his hand, as well as a small black leather bag. A fly was to meet him at the back gate of Roydon, and wherever he was going he wished to have a word with Lady Vernon before setting out on his travels.

"Lady Vernon was a little uneasy," he said, "lest that attack of the young woman at the gate-house should turn out to be diphtheria, and I promised to see her and report, and I'm glad to say it is nothing of the kind. So, as I shan't be home till to-morrow, I thought it best to look in to-day to set Lady Vernon's mind at ease. Good-bye, Miss Vernon."

The doctor took his leave, as I have said; and Maud saw the shower of dotted sunlight as he strode on the path toward the Hall flying through the interstices of the leaves across the glazed black bag he carried, or, more softly, mottling his rug and his hat. She could not account for the slight awkwardness that seemed to affect everything he said or did during those two or three minutes, and she observed that the pale gentleman with the long upper lip and short chin, smooth and blue, smiled more than was necessary, and that the obliquity that

spoiled his really fine eyes was a good deal more marked than usual.

The doctor was soon quite beyond her ken, and pursued his way at a brisk pace to the house, where he was instantly admitted to the library.

He had thrown down his rugs and other property in the hall, and had merely his hat in his hand as he entered.

Lady Vernon got up and took his hand, and smiled faintly and wearily, and, with a little sigh, said :

"I did not think the time had arrived. I have had, as usual, some letters to write; but you are punctual."

She glanced at the old bulb French clock over the chimney-piece.

"Sit down, Doctor Malkin; I have been thinking over what I said, and I don't recollect that I have anything very particular to add. There are only two things that occur to me to say: the first is, that I have quite made up my mind upon the main point; and the second is, that it must take place immediately."

The doctor bowed, and his eyes remained fixed on the table for a minute. The lady did not speak. She was also looking down, but with a little frown, and affected to be diligently arranging her letters one over the other.

Doctor Malkin felt the obligation upon him to say something.

"It is as well often—generally—I don't see any difficulty; in fact, I know there can't be, unless it should exist *here*," he said, in a low tone, speaking by fits and starts.

"There is none," said Lady Vernon, with a little irritation in her look and tone. Perhaps she did not understand Doctor Malkin's affectation of embarrassment. "I have made a note of the day I now wish to appoint, and of my reason for greater promptitude; I thought it would be more satisfactory to you to have it in that form."

"Thanks; it is so considerate," said Doctor Malkin, taking the note she dropped before him. "I'll just, if you allow me, run my eye over it."

He opened it. It was not a very long memorandum.

"Perfectly clear," he said, when he had read it through; "and I must say, your reason appears to me a very powerful one—very."

"Mr. Pembroke Damian is a very admirable man," said the lady, after an interval of silence. "He was one of the most eloquent preachers I ever heard, and

a man whose life was more eloquent still than his preaching, and he is so able, so wise. I look upon him, taken for all in all, as one of the worthies of England."

Lady Vernon had raised her dark, cold eyes, and was looking, not indeed at the doctor, but straight before her, to the wall, as she spoke this high moral testimony.

"He certainly is a most remarkable man," said Doctor Malkin.

"He is a benefactor to the human race," said the lady. "When I think of all the suffering he has alleviated, and the despair to which he has been the instrument of admitting comfort and peace, I am justified in regarding him, as I do, as the minister and angel, of heaven. I have boundless confidence in that good and able man."

Doctor Malkin acquiesced.

"And I thank Heaven there is such a person living, and in his peculiar position," continued Lady Vernon. "Will you be so good as to give him this note."

Doctor Malkin deferentially took the letter she handed him.

"It is a very happy reflection that my confidence, inevitable as it is, should be placed in so sagacious and pious a man," she added.

"He has certainly been a useful man," said the doctor, still looking down on the envelope, with the address, the "Rev. Pembroke Damian, M.A.," &c., in the clear and graceful hand of Lady Vernon, "and a most conscientious person—a truly religious man. You, Lady Vernon, can speak with much more authority than I upon that point; and, certainly, I will say, his ideas have been in advance of his time; his has been a most influential mind, and in some points has led the opinion of his age."

"I would trust my life, as I am ready to trust that which, you will say, ought to be dearer still to me, in his hands," said Lady Vernon.

"He does not quite take the leading part he did, you know," said Doctor Malkin. "For the last two or three years he has not done a very great deal."

"That is a rather unpleasant piece of information, you must suppose, for me," Lady Vernon said, with an angry flush. "If I did not suppose it a little exaggerated, I think I should almost hesitate."

Doctor Malkin knew that the lady wished him to understand that he had made a stupid speech. He had put his foot in it. He said hastily :

"You know he is most ably seconded. There is not a more brilliant man, perhaps,

living, as I have explained to you, and—and, of course, I don't mean that Mr. Damian has abdicated, or anything of the kind. Of course he takes a very essential part, and is, in so far as your interests and feelings are personally concerned, everything he ever was."

"I have always assumed that to be so," said Lady Vernon, severely, "and I should be obliged to you, Doctor Malkin, if you would report to me any such dereliction of duty on the part of Mr. Damian, should you find anything the least like it, which, I must tell you frankly, I can't suppose. I can't credit it, because I know so much of him; his character is so perfectly upright, and he is in all respects so consistent a Christian. I relied upon this, and upon his principal and actual responsibility."

The lady's eyes still flashed, and she spoke sharply. Doctor Malkin was therefore still uncomfortable. He saw, too late, that she possibly construed his words as casting an undesirable responsibility upon her. He hastened, therefore, to reply.

"But I am afraid, Lady Vernon, I must have failed to convey myself. My meaning was, I assure you, very far from that. On the contrary, I believe Mr. Damian was never more vigorous in mind, or active in his habits. You may make your mind perfectly easy upon that point. He deposes nothing—nothing, in fact, involving a responsibility. I'm afraid I must have expressed myself very clumsily indeed."

Lady Vernon did not care to discuss the point further.

"I need not tell you how much I have suffered," she said. "It may come, very soon, all right again. Let us hope the best. I hope, at least, it may not be very protracted. You will return to-morrow?"

"Yes, certainly; and if you please, Lady Vernon, I can call here at any hour that suits you best, after I come back, and tell you what I have done. And I don't anticipate the slightest trouble."

"It is better to come as early as you can, thank you. And there will be some trifling arrangements still to complete, which we can then talk over. You set out, I suppose, immediately on leaving this?"

"Immediately," said he. "I have a good way to go. I think I have very full instructions now. Do you recollect anything more?"

"No. The rest had better wait till to-morrow, and it is time, Doctor Malkin, I quite agree with you, that you were on your way. So I will say good-bye."

Lady Vernon gave her hand to Doctor Malkin, without a smile, and he was more than usually deferential and solemn as he took it.

At the room door, Doctor Malkin recollected his accidental meeting with Miss Vernon, and returned for a moment to mention the circumstance to Lady Vernon, as it had obliged him to allege a pretext for his visit to Roydon Hall.

"Well," said the lady, growing a little red, "I should have preferred saying nothing. But it can't be helped now. Where did you meet her?"

He told her.

She looked down in momentary misgiving—thoughtful. But she had learned that Captain Vivian, who had undoubtedly driven through the town of Roydon the evening before, had left again for the station, and had gone away by train, and she was sure to hear more particularly in the morning about his movements from Mr. Dawc, to whom she had written a very agitated letter of inquiry and alarm.

She would take her, if possible, to the Tinterns next day, and somewhere else the day following, and keep her, should any uncertainty arise, out of the way of any further meeting with that perverse gentleman.

So Lady Vernon, recollecting that the silence had been rather long, said suddenly:

"I was thinking, I may tell you, as I have taken you so unreservedly into council, whether, under all circumstances, the grounds here are quite a suitable place for Maud to take these solitary walks in."

"Well, as you say Lady Mardykes' invitation was for Monday, she will be leaving this so soon, it is scarcely——"

"Well, yes; we can talk of that to-morrow, when we meet," interrupted Lady Vernon. "For the present, good-bye, Doctor Malkin."

So again giving him her hand, she and the doctor, who was not himself looking very well or very merry, made a second leave-taking, and he took his departure.

His allusion to Maud's departure on the Monday following was in the tone of her own very decided feeling.

Lady Vernon was glad that Lady Mardykes had fixed so early a day for her daughter's visit to Carsbrook.

CHAPTER LII. MERCY CRESWELL.

NEXT day an humble but unlooked-for visitor appeared at Roydon Hall.

Miss Vernon, on returning in the after-

noon from her short walk to inquire at the gate-house for the sick girl, encountered the slim, dark figure of Latimer, her mother's maid, in the hall.

Latimer had evidently been looking for her, for the demure angular figure which had been crossing the hall toward the drawing-room as she entered, turned sharp to the left, and approached her with a quick step, and making a little inclination before Maud, Lady Vernon's maid said, in her low, dry tones:

"Please, miss, my lady desires me to say that Mercy Creswell, which you recollect her, perhaps, in the nursery long ago, being niece of old Mrs. Creswell, that died here when you was but a child, miss, has come here to see her ladyship and you, also, if you please."

"I do remember her very well. I must have been a very little thing, Latimer, when she went away."

"About six years old you was, miss, when she left. Where will you please to see her?" replied Latimer.

"Where is she now?"

"In my lady's morning room, please, miss. But you can see her, my lady says, anywhere you please," answered Latimer.

"Then I should like to see her quietly, if you would tell her to come to my dressing-room, and tell some one to send Jones there, please, and I will go myself in two or three minutes to see her."

Latimer disappeared; and Maud in a minute more was running up the stairs to her room.

We all lean a little fondly to the recollections of childhood, especially those images of very early memory, from which chance has long widely separated us.

But Maud could not get up any great interest in this particular woman, Mercy Creswell. She was, as Maud remembered her, a red-haired, stunted, freckled girl of perhaps some sixteen years; plump, and broad, and strong, with a cunning and false gaiety in her fat face, and who laughed a great deal, not pleasantly, but rather maliciously, and at untoward times.

Maud had a remembrance of an occasional slap or pinch, now and then, slyly bestowed by this short, freckled, laughing young lady, who rather liked getting her into a scrape now and then, and who used in playful moods, when they were running about the rooms together, and no one by, to run her into a corner, hold her to the wall, and make ugly faces, with her nose almost touching Maud's, till the child

would scream with fright and anger; and then she would fall into shrieks of laughter, and hug and kiss her a little more roughly than was necessary, and after this somewhat sore and uncomfortable reconciliation, she would charge her—for the love she bore her own, own poor little Mercy Creswell, who would be sent away if she did, never more to dress her doll, or trundle her cart, or roll her ball for her—not to tell nurse, or nursery-maid, or Miss Latimer, that they had had "a falling out."

Her recollections of this early attendant and, under the rose, playmate, therefore, were not quite as sunny as they might be. Still they were connected with happier days, or what now seemed happier, than those which had come later; and perhaps if Mercy Creswell was sometimes a disagreeable companion, it was to be attributed, in great measure, to the boisterous, and sometimes mischievous, spirits of very early girlhood.

When she reached her dressing-room, Maud Vernon beheld, for the first time, for fourteen years, this same Mercy Creswell.

The interval had not improved her personal appearance. Short and square, with a very fat, and rather flat face, mottled with very large freckles, and her red hair showing under her bonnet, she might have passed for a woman of the age, at least, of Don Quixote's housekeeper. No one could have supposed that her age did not exceed thirty years. She smiled so ecstatically that she nearly shut up her cunning little eyes in rolls of fat wrinkles, while she blinked them very fast, as if tears were forcing their way from them; of which, I don't think, there was any other sign. She was not prepossessing; but Maud could not find it in her heart to repulse her when whisking aside her green veil, she rose on tip-toe, put her short arms round Maud's neck, and kissing her energetically, said:

"Ye'll excuse the liberty, Miss Maud dear, but it is such a time since your own poor little Mercy has saw'd you. La! what a beautiful young lady you have growed up since then; well, to be sure, and me as small as ever. Well, la! it is a queer world, miss. I 'a bin in many a place since Roydon nursery. La, miss! do you mind the big ball o' red leather, and the black man with the cymbals, and all the toys and trumpets, dollies and donkeys. Well, dearie me! so there was, wasn't there? La! and we was great friends,

you and me, ye'll excuse me saying so; and many a day's play together we two has had; and I thought I'd 'a heard o' you married long ago, miss, but there's time enough yet. 'Twill be a lord, nothing less, whenever he comes; bless him."

"And you, Mercy, you have not married yet?" said Maud.

"Me? La bless ye! not I, by no means, miss. Oh, la! what would I be doin' with a husband? Oh, la! no."

"Well, as you say, there is time enough, Mercy; and what have you been doing ever since?"

"La, miss! I could not answer that in a week. I was at service, after leaving here, first with Lady Mardykes."

"At Lady Mardykes'? I know her. I'm sure you had a pleasant time in her house?" said Maud, eagerly.

"That it was; no pleasanter, miss; no end of great folks there, and music, and fine clothes, and all sorts, and play-acting, and dancing by night; and croquet and lawn billiards, and the like o' that, all day; or driving off, with cold luncheons, to this place or that, nothing but grand people, and all sorts of fun; high jinks, the gentlemen used to call it."

"I'm going there, to Carsbrook, on Monday next," said Maud, who was full of this visit.

"Well to be you, miss," said Mercy Creswell, looking down and coughing a little; "and I would not wonder, miss, if I was to be there myself," she added, looking up again, and screwing her mouth together, and drawing in her breath through the circular orifice, while she raised her eyebrows with a lackadaisical ogle at the window.

"Oh? Really! Well, mind you must make me out if you should," said Maud, gaily.

"I'll be sure to," she answered, with one of her sly giggles.

"It is a great black-and-white house, very large, ain't it?" said Maud, smiling.

"La! How did ye find that out?" Mercy Creswell continued, with the same irrepressible giggle.

"You see I know more about it than you fancied," continued Maud. "It is three stories high, and close under the windows there is an old-fashioned flower-garden, with the croquet ground in the middle, and the lawn billiards and all that, and an old mulberry-tree growing in the middle of it; and it is surrounded on three sides by a tall hedge clipped like a wall,

with here and there an arch cut through it, something like the yew cloisters behind the shield-room here, only very much larger."

"Why, you must 'a bin there, miss," her visitor cried, half stifled with laughter.

"No, never; and there are ever so many bedrooms, and more guests generally than you could number—all kinds of great, and wise, and clever, and famous people."

As Maud proceeded, her short, fat visitor in her shawl and big bonnet was actually obliged to get up and stump about the room, so extravagant her laughter by degrees became.

"You see I know something about it," continued Maud, laughing also. "As you used to say to me, long ago, a little bird told me. But I shall soon be there, I hope, to see for myself; and I believe every one is made to feel quite at home there immediately; and it is such a hospitable house, every one says. Your only difficulty is, how to get away; and, by-the-bye, do you know Doctor Antomarchi?"

"I 'a heard of him once or twice," screamed Mercy Creswell, almost suffocated with laughter.

"Now listen to me. We have laughed enough," said Maud. "You mustn't laugh. I can't get you to tell me anything; you do nothing but laugh; and I really wished so much to hear about him. I and Miss Medwyn saw him at the Wymering ball, and we were both so curious. Can you tell me anything about him?"

"Not I, miss."

"Well, if you like, Jones shall make you a wager that he will be there at the same time," continued the young lady, a little puzzled by her fat friend's irrepressible and continued screams of laughter, and beginning to feel the infection a little more herself; "and the Spanish ambassador; he will be there also."

"Oh! Oh, la! Oh, miss, stop! Oh, oh, oh, you're a killing of me. I'm—I'm—I'm not able to—to—oh, la! ha, ha, ha! catch my breath." And fat Mercy Creswell, clinging to the corner of a wardrobe, actually shook with laughter till tears rolled plentifully down her big cheeks; and Maud, and her maid Jones, who was nevertheless disgusted by the vulgar familiarity and noise of the clumsy Miss Creswell, were drawn in in spite of themselves, and joined at last vehemently and hilariously in the chorus.

"Well, don't mind me," at last sobbed Miss Creswell, recovering slowly, "I always

was one, oh, ho, ho! that laughs at nothing. I do; I'm as tired now, my dear—oh, ho, ho!—as if I ran up to the top o' the fells of Golden Friars, and la! but that's high enough; but how did you hear all about it, so exact, Miss Maud dear; where in the world——”

“I may as well tell you, then,” she answered, also recovering. “I heard everything about it from Miss Medwyn; you must remember her very well. She has been there very often, and she, I know, will be staying there at the same time that I am.”

But at this moment Miss Mercy experienced another relapse, nearly as long and violent, every now and then, half-articulately, blurring out, in sobs and gasps amidst the screaming roulades of her laughter: “Oh la! ha, ha! Miss Med—Med—oh, ho! ho!—Medwyn—la! ha, ha, ha! She's so staid, she is—she's so nice. La! ha, ha, ha!” and so on.

When at length a lull came, Miss Vernon, who was protected by its impertinence from any tendency to join in this last explosion of her old under-nursery-maid's merriment, said gravely:

“Mamma has not been very well; she has been complaining of headache; and I think we are making a good deal of noise. I don't know how far off it may be heard.”

“Well, dear Miss Maud, I hope you ain't offended, miss; but, dearie me, I could not but laugh a bit, thinking of old Miss Medwyn among all them queer dancers, and fiddlers, and princes, and play-actors, and flute-players; I hope you'll hexcuse the noise I 'a made, secin' I really could not help it, miss, by no chance. I know Lady Mardykes well; why shouldn't I, having lived in her service for a many years? and a very great lady she is, and well liked, as I well know; and her papa, Lord Warhampton, a'most the greatest man in England; no wonder she should have all the highest in the land in her house, whenever she so pleases. But, la! ha, ha, ha! It's a queer world. Who'd 'a thought. There is sich queer things happens.”

This time, her laughter was but an amused giggle, and she did not lose her command over it.

“Have you had luncheon?” inquired Maud.

“I thank you, miss, hearty, in the 'ouse-keeper's room, before I came up to see her ladyship,” answered short Miss Mercy, with a comfortable sigh, blowing her nose a little, and adjusting her big bonnet and old green veil, and smoothing her red tresses, while,

still out of breath, she tried to recover the fatigues of her long fit of laughter. “Well, Miss Maud dear, and how are ye?” inquired Mercy, suddenly returning from gay to grave.

“Oh, very well, thanks; and so are you; and you haven't married, you tell me, so you have nothing on earth to trouble you. I wish we were all like the trees, Mercy; they live very long and very happily, I dare say, longer, certainly, and more quietly than we do a great deal, and I don't hear of any marrying or giving in marriage among them.”

“Not they, not a bit; they're never married, and why should we, miss? That's a very wise saying,” acquiesced Mercy Creswell, very gravely looking at her.

“If you really think so,” said Maud, “you are a wise woman; I have been trying to convince my maid Jones, but I'm afraid she is still rather in favour of the vulgar way of thinking.”

“Well, miss, you'll not find me so. I make my own clothes, miss, and I think my own thoughts,” said Mercy, with a wise nod.

“You are a woman after my own heart then,” said Maud, gaily.

“And how are you, miss?” repeats Mercy Creswell.

“I told you I am very well, thanks,” says Maud.

“None o' them headaches you used to have when you was a little thing?”

“Oh, no! I sometimes have a little nervous pain from cold over my eye; neuralgia they call it; but that is nothing, it never continues very long.”

“It never gets into your eye?” asked Mercy, staring steadily and gravely at the suspected organ, and screwing her lips together uneasily all the time. “Them pains, they say, sometimes begins in the eyes, miss.”

Maud laughed.

“But Heaven only knows, as you say, miss. I dare say you are right, whatever you think; for every one knows best about their own pains. Sich is the will of Heaven—so we leave them things to wiser heads, miss, and I'm sure where you're going you'll be comfortable and amused.”

“If I'm not, Mercy, I shall be the first visitor at that pleasant house who ever had such a complaint to make.”

Mercy was suddenly very near exploding in a new fit of laughing, but she mastered it.

“Well, miss, I'll be there, I think—not unlikely,” said Mercy.

"As a servant?" asked Miss Maud.

"Well, as an attendant, I would say," answered she.

"Oh!"

"And if I am, I'll be sure, I hope, to see you, miss, if you gives permission; and I'm sure I desires nothing but your 'ealth and 'appiness, miss. Why should I? And I must be going now, Miss Maud. Good-bye to you, miss." And again, but more solemnly, the short woman extended her thick arms, and rising to her toes, kissed Miss Vernon, and with a more ceremonious politeness, took her leave of "Miss Jones," the lady's-maid, who regarded her with a refined and polite disgust.

So the squat figure of Miss Mercy Creswell disappeared, and Maud, for a time, lost sight of that uncouth reminder of old times and the Koydon nursery.

NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

NOTHING is easier, if we are not very particular about the accuracy of our judgment, than to judge; and this holds good with respect to nations no less than to individuals. There is a tempting facility in providing oneself, so to speak, with a set of little mental pigeon-holes, in which we can stow away, neatly ticketed, our opinions concerning the several branches of the great human family. We can pull out at pleasure the puppet that represents, say a Russian, and make him dance in most approved Muscovite fashion. There can be no mistake, for is he not a Russian, and have we not had him in our catalogue, duly classed and numbered, for many a day? So with our nearer neighbours, the French. We know all about the French. A Frenchman, as everybody is aware, is a being light of heart and supple of spine, a sort of human butterfly, gay, polite, and I am afraid frivolous, all bows and grins, and good-humour. An Englishman, ah! he comes out of quite another sized pigeon-hole, and capers to a different and less lively tune. He is a grotesque and eccentric personage, who invariably realises enormous fortunes by exporting little penknives, who drinks raw rum, suffers from spleen, and has red whiskers of fabulous proportions. His wife and daughters still, in defiance of the tyranny of fashion, wear green veils and preposterous bonnets of Dunstable straw, and have front-teeth of alarming length and prominence.

The truth, often unwelcome, is, that a

clear and sharp distinction between the qualities of different nations is from its nature hopeless. We cannot draw a hard and fast line that shall rigidly separate, like a well-defined frontier, the characteristics of one group of nations from those of another. Black men and white, red men and brown, have so much in common that the points of resemblance very much outnumber those of contrast. Not only were there heroes before Agamemnon, but in far-away parts of the earth, and among races reputed barbarous, no doubt there existed in Homer's days of old as much valour, wisdom, and merciful self-restraint, as did honour to the bravest and the wisest in that memorable leaguer before Troy. Still we are not all alike, not stamped with the wearisome uniformity of so many newly-minted shillings. Men and women are really as various as the coins in some numismatist's collection, where in the same drawers lie the antique doubloon, the "broad piece," so many pieces of which buccanering Drake brought home to Plymouth, and the glossy napoleon, where the Spanish gold ounce, or the massive mohur of Mogul coinage, jostles the oblong gold itzabues of Japan, or the queer white platinum eagles, worth ever so many roubles apiece, which bear the stamp of the Czar Nicholas. There are subtle distinctions, worth remembering, between the inhabitants of different provinces. There are more salient features in the national character of those whom alien speech and creed, whom seas and mountains, keep asunder.

There is one great difficulty which perpetually starts up in our path when we would take stock, as it were, honestly and fairly, of what belongs to our neighbours. The new-comer, whose sense of the difference between what he has left and what he has found is relatively very much keener than that of the old resident, is of necessity obliged to rely on meagre evidence. The old joke of the English traveller at Lille, who, seeing a red-haired girl from the Hôtel de la Poste come forth with lantern and a feed of oats for his horses, forthwith pencilled down in his note-book that all the women of Lille had red hair, conveyed, at any rate, a half-truth. Jones has a capital dinner at a mountain inn somewhere in Tyrol; his bill is low; the Fraulein kisses his hand in acknowledgment of the splendid largesse of a zwanziger; the comely, kind-eyed landlady helps him to buckle on his knapsack; the hearty, bluff landlord

walks half an hour beside him, over the uplands, to guide him into the right road; and ever after Jones will swear to all Little Pedlington that all Germans, and more especially Tyrolers, are angels. But what says Robinson when he gets back to Stoke Pogis? His experiences have not, perhaps, been so agreeable as those of his brother, who went further afield. It is true, no doubt, that Robinson was scandalously cheated—of one franc nine sous—at that villanous French refreshment room at the Sansnom Junction. The waiter was a rogue, the dame du comptoir not guiltless, and the sworn interpreter conveniently deaf to the complaint of the Briton. But still, my dear Robinson, fourteenpence-halfpenny was no such mighty loss, and you need scarcely include the whole Gallic race in one sweeping condemnation as confounded cheats because of that peccadillo on the part of a licensed libertine in a white apron.

But the first delightful impressions after a neophyte's plunge into foreign parts, the early bloom on the peach, the dew on the rosebud, can never be replaced. It is that which makes Calais so deliciously French; Calais advisedly, for the ill-fated voyager, who first sets foot on continental earth at Boulogne, will never have photographed on his memory the same picture of French provincial life. Thackeray was right when he said that a man who wished to understand France should come to Calais in a yacht, stay for a day, and then go away for ever. The ephemeral sightseer should be an educated man, of course, well up in his Sterne, able to pass a competitive examination as to the meek Franciscan monk, and Lafleur, and the ever-ready snuff-box of the Sentimental One. He should know all about King Edward and Queen Philippa, and the picturesque hostages in clean white shirts, with halters round their aldermanic necks, who figure the most conspicuously in the local annals. He ought, also, to be tolerably well grounded in the statistics of French rural life, to be aware that the gentleman in a green coat, with a white umbrella and a straw hat, and the tiniest snipping of red ribbon at his button-hole, is a landed proprietor, mayor of his village, and member of the general council, while Jean and Pierre, whistling as they load the cart, are not hired labourers—for look at the black velvet hunting-caps they wear, and the gold watch which one of them produces from beneath his blouse—but the sons of a

farmer as rich as many who, in England, ride to hounds, and enter a horse for the Welter Stakes. Those are genuine labourers yonder in the sabots, and with blouses not so clean, and the fishermen, with gold rings in their ears, and long boots, sodden with sea-water, and the stout young woman, in the round-eared cap and the purple woollen stockings, and the postilion, limping in stiff boots, with rusty spurs and jacket, heavy with worsted fringe and crimson tassels—all these are poor enough, and, should they be ill to-morrow, have little but the hospital to break their fall into the abyss of want.

Yet this is not what Englishmen call France, not what the gentlemen from the United States—and still more the ladies—call France; not what contents the dandy, wrapped in sables, and swooping swiftly down by express from St. Petersburg, or the ardent-eyed Brazilian who jumps from the steamer's gangway on the pier at Havre, as eager to squander the heavy lump of dollars he has brought with him, as ever was one of the pirate sailors, whom Bishop Dampier tells us about, to fling away the ill-gotten cash made by shearing the Dons of their golden fleece. Paris has been pronounced, on high authority, to be France. But Paris cannot be taken in and possessed at a glance as smaller places can, and it is, or, alas! was, besides by far too cosmopolitan to offer those strongly marked national features, which the eye of a new acquaintance catches so readily. Too much friction is certain to smooth away those salient corners and sharp angles of the popular character. It is in remote regions and nooks difficult of access that the finest specimens are to be found. In hilly districts, for instance, not as yet overrun by the invading army of tourists, the natives will commonly be found to be intensely national. How very High-Dutch, by way of an example, is the sunburnt peasant of the Bavarian highlands, while in the more unfrequented cantons of Switzerland there are actually Swiss who might be esteemed worthy countrymen of the mythic Tell and the real Melcthal, bluff dalesmen utterly unlike the population of waiters and voituriers whom hasty travellers are prone to consider as representative Helvetians. Locomotion, in fact, the hurried, general, and indiscriminate rushing in shoals, wherever the steam-horse can whirl along, is an unsparing leveller of the old landmarks. Manners and customs, wants and prices, very soon become assimilated to

some uniform standard. There was no doubt a time, not so very far distant, when the differences between nations were more perceptible than they now are. Thus the Frenchman of Shakespeare is very much the same as the Frenchman of Hogarth, as the lean, keen-featured, mercurial Gaul, easily irritated, as easily appeased, of whom we used to see so much in old caricatures. There was something lovable in that obsolete Frenchman of the eighteenth century, something of chivalry withal, a faint suggestion of Don Quixote naturalised on the banks of the Seine, and with a most un-Castilian taste for dancing and fiddling. Now and then, but very seldom, we may still chance upon a survivor of this extinct generation, some spare little man, with a grey head and a long chin, who smirks and bows as if he were some Gallic Rip Van Winkle, newly awakened from a slumber that began when Louis the Fifteenth was king. So, also, with the accepted type of our own insular character. John Bull, with his top boots and flapped pockets, his sturdy self-conceit and his indomitable obstinacy, was probably no such very extravagant conception when Gilray's pencil was in savage activity. Minor copies of the great original might be seen in the boxes of every tavern, or making their way with square-toed tread along the greasy pavement of London streets. It was a time when we were blatantly and boastfully patriotic; the period of broad-brimmed, low-crowned hats, of beef, punch, and a sort of practical pharisaism which made us incessantly congratulate ourselves that we were not as the benighted foreigners were.

Thrift is so much of an heir-loom with some nations, and a prudent propensity to save is so intimately interwoven in their natures, that on this point, at any rate, there appears to be a radical difference between them and their neighbours. Perhaps of all races the most thrifty, employing the word in its true sense, are the Chinese and the Hindoos. Thrift is a word of very wide interpretation. It does not mean, as the root principle and guiding star of those whose beacon it is, mere stoical abnegation of the good things of life. The essence of true thrift is to make the most out of such material as comes to hand; to waste nothing, to toss away nothing, not to neglect what might be valuable adjuncts to the essentials of our sustenance, to be careful, thoughtful managers of whatever we have to manage.

The two great Eastern races are our masters in this respect. They have so very many mouths to feed, that they must husband all their resources. Every spoonful of rice, whether produced by the garden culture of China, or by the ruder tillage of India, is eagerly snatched at; every onion, every gourd, is pressed into the service of man. Instead of bird's-nesting, the urchins of the hamlet catch small fish, or gather roots and berries. The large and constant demand for food stimulates its supply to the highest pitch. Waste and lavishness, except on the occasion of a wedding-feast or of some red letter day in the Buddhist or Brahminical calendar, are unknown. To a Hindoo audience in particular, the parable of Dives and Lazarus would not come home as an illustration of familiar every-day life. The rich man of their experience does not care to fare sumptuously every day. He may be, and probably is, a mighty merchant prince and colossal money-lender. His villa at Garden Reach, or his mansion in Benares, very likely swarms with miscellaneous dependants, and the costliest London-made furniture may encumber his ill-arranged saloons. Yet this Baboo, who annually defrauds the Indian income-tax collectors to an extent which surpasses all the evasions of the British shuffler, and whose whim it sometimes is to offer to the upper ten hundred of local European society balls of unparalleled splendour, is anything but self-indulgent. Those who partake of his grandiose hospitality seldom care to think, in the midst of those floods of iced champagne, and tables piled with every dainty, how very sparsely and plainly their entertainer is contented to subsist. A handful of rice, and a few yards of cotton cloth, are his simple requirements in the way of food and raiment. His poorest servants and hangers-on are as delicately nourished as he, their master and lord. They have pulse and vegetable curry, a little oil wherewith to anoint themselves, a little ghee and a pinch of salt, and so has the founder of the feast. The Dives of Bengal lives almost as temperately as an anchorite. The Pole is a born prodigal. Thrift, in his eyes, is something ignoble, and saving a mark of meanness. He will feast and glitter to-day, at the risk of laying up for himself a succession of hungry and miserable morrows. But then he has hope. That bright illusive residuum at the bottom of Pandora's box of horrors has been thoroughly domiciled in poor Poland. The whole gifted nation, so clever and so

indolent, so winning of manner, and so unstable of purpose, seems always possessed by a Micawberish fancy that something delightful is about to turn up. Never mind mortgages and debt, never mind the bad husbandry that keeps the soil sterile, or the lack of forethought which fills the pastures with stunted cattle and raw-boned, ragged sheep; what matter if the peasant be over head and ears in the books of the Jewish brandy-seller, and if every roof be ruinous and every field weed-grown. Something is sure to happen. A salt mine will be found, perhaps, or a factory will be built, or a war will come that will clear off old scores, and fill our purses in some inexplicably convenient way; so let us have out the crazy old carriage, and the shaggy, half-broken horses, and drive along the sandy roads to somebody's château, that we may dine, and dance, and conjure dull care away by the potent charms of generous Hungarian wine, and the wild Magyar waltz. The Poland of our day must be in some respects very like the Ireland of the Edgeworths.

Perhaps the heavy Dutchman, the genuine, pipe-smoking, ponderous Hollander, so slow of speech and of thought, so voluminously attired, and with such a taste for vegetating among the flowers, and wooden lions, and gaudily painted summer-houses of the garden on the bank of a sluggish canal, may once have existed elsewhere than in the imagination of satirical novelists. But we cannot find him in the flesh, if we scour the Netherlands from Flushing to the remotest hamlet of Friesland. He and his gorgeous tulips, his fat frow, and his plump and silent daughters, have passed away like a dull dream, and the Dutchmen and Dutchwomen of the present day appear to an unprejudiced eye to be as lively, active, and well-proportioned a race as any in Europe. There are changes elsewhere. Disgusted tourists return from Ireland, grumbling at the absence of that picturesque poverty and wild spirit of fun that they had gone prepared for. Paddy, they complain, is not the tattered jester they expected him to turn out. Comfort, it seems, spoils the sparkle of the Celtic wit, and even the carmen of Dublin have lost the traditional art of keeping a strange fire in a roar of laughter by their powers of repartee. It is possible, in these degenerate days, to travel through Clare or Kerry without being much more amused than if the jaunt were made in Suffolk or Lancashire. The native drollery of the

people is fast becoming a tradition, belonging to the barbarous old times that have now happily passed away.

It is not only to the west of St. George's Channel that freedom and material prosperity prove capable, among other results, of sobering the exuberant spirits of a people. No one who knew Italy in the former epoch of division and misrule, could fail to be struck with the change that has come over the popular temper since then. The old-world Italian, the cringing, merry, affectionate fellow with whom you could never be seriously angry, be his shortcomings what they might, is likely soon to be as extinct as the dodo. His was not by any means a high standard of moral worth, but his good-nature was so genuine, and his pantomime so eloquent, that you loved him even when he cheated you. His faults, you felt, were those which were in a manner forced upon him by the abuses of the bad government under which he was reared. When every official, from the judge on the bench to the pettiest agent of the prince's little custom-house, was openly and notoriously venal, when small tyranny and vexatious restrictions made up the whole theory of government, and no business went on without bribes, and fines, and flattery, and extortion, it was not wonderful that poor Beppo should try a little trickery on his own account sometimes. All that is altered now, and Italy is united and free, and moderately thriving, but her children are perhaps not so kind or so polished as when the long columns of white-coated Austrians used to raise the dust along the Emilian Way, and when every day or two of travel brought the pilgrim face to face with the striped posts that indicated a new frontier, and a harpy host of doganieri and policemen.

The colonising instinct is often said to be one main point in which the Teutonic nations, English, Dutch, and Germans, differ from the Romanee races of Southern Europe. Yet when we consider that the Spaniards overran and repeopled Mexico and Peru, and that an immense proportion of the United States, with the whole Dominion of Canada, once belonged to the French crown, the argument is hardly tenable. It would be more accurate to say that the spirit which once prompted the French and Spaniards to take possession of the waste places of the earth is worn out, or has changed its aims for others. In our own case, in spite of the steady flow of emigration from our shores to the lands of

promise that lie beyond the ocean, we are outstripped by the Germans, who pour into America in fast increasing numbers, while the Irish have learned to overcome the strong local attachment which for centuries made them as stay-at-home a people as any in Christendom. The grossest improbability that could once have been suggested was a Chinese emigration to the New World. It seemed inconceivable that a people whose civilisation was all-sufficient in its own idea, and that held foreigners and foreign countries in contempt, should suddenly begin to export labour, and that, too, in defiance of every discouragement and difficulty. The coolies who come to compete, in America and in Australia, with white workers, have merits of their own. They toil hard, are civil and intelligent subordinates, learn with surprising facility, accept low wages, and live and save where not even thrifty Hans from the Fatherland could pick up more than a bare subsistence. It seems hard on John Chinaman when wrathful mobs of Irish navvies or English gold-diggers assail his camp with stones and bludgeons, cudgel his unlucky shoulders, shear off his doomed pigtail, and drive him with ignominy from the scene of his labours, merely for the original sin of being a Chinaman. But certain ugly experiences in Java, Malacca, and Peru have proved that the convenient Chinese, like fire, is a good servant but a bad master, and that, however meekly he may begin, he grows dangerous when his yellow countrymen, affiliated to the same secret society, and with the same feline propensity to let the claws peep forth from the velvet, outnumber the white inhabitants of a country.

That mountaineers are greedy for money is a fact that few of those who have roamed among Pyrenean peaks or crossed Alpine passes will be inclined to dispute. The conditions of their existence are so severe as to palliate, if not to excuse, this excessive love of gain. To the inhabitants of the higher Alpine valleys, for example, the battle of life is no courtly tournament, but a fierce wrestle with the ever-present foes of cold and hunger. The wolf is so very near those humble doors of theirs, that we may pardon the poor herdsmen, if they show themselves somewhat grasping in their dealings with those who visit their bleak glens. Theirs is but a short summer, and a sorry harvest of dwarf oats and pigmy barley, even if the straggling corn can be persuaded to ripen at all so near to the flower-bordered edge of the great green-

blue glacier. Their cows must graze fast, and their milkmaids be active in cheese-making while the sun shines and the sweet herbage is plentiful, for always by night the warning chill is in the thin atmosphere, telling of the long dark winter soon to return. And then in comes winter, like a conquering king, with all the dread accompaniments of hail and whirlwind, with the hollow roar of the descending avalanche and the blinding fury of the tourmente, and the land is locked and silent in the bands of ice and snow. Add to this that the mountain peasant finds warm clothing and fuel both scarce and dear, that every cart-load or mule-load of firewood has to be brought with painful toil from the lower country, and all garments bought at the distant market-town, and it is no longer a source of surprise that Uri, Schwytz, and Unterwalden should have supplied the sternest and most unscrupulous mercenaries that ever fought for hire and plunder during the mediæval wars of France and Italy. The hardy hirelings from Andermatt or Grindelwald knew by bitter experience the value of lowland gold.

The national character of the Jews has unquestionably undergone more than one great change, the first of which dates from the end of the Babylonish captivity. Before that great event the Hebrew race had manifested a fickle but passionate admiration for foreigners and foreign fashions. There were Syromaniacs among the Jews of Solomon's reign, as there have been Anglomaniacs among the French. Their bravest captains disregarded the law of Moses, that they might ride to war on horseback, like the mounted chieftains of Moab and the cavalry of Egypt. All the fire of the prophetic zeal, and all the rigours of the judge, could not prevent the smoke of sacrifice from rising from the idolatrous hill-altars. It was in vain that the axe was laid to the stems of the sacred groves of Anti-Lebanon, for fresh sites were found, high up in the mountains, where the dark worship of Astarte and of Moloch, perhaps of Isis as well, might be practised under the guidance of heathen priests. There was a continual struggle between the true and staunch supporters of their forefathers' creed and the light and frivolous multitude who were drawn towards the splendid paganism that hemmed in the frontiers of Israel.

A more remarkable and enduring change than that which followed the rebuilding of the Temple has never been chronicled, with

reference to the conscience and temper of any people. Henceforth the Jew was altered indeed. The old hankering after alien ways, the old preference for innovations, had been replaced by the deepest patriotism and the most single-minded cleaving to the national religion that the world has ever seen. It was not alone the foreign faith that was abhorred, but the foreigner as well. Those grim zealots who died by their own swords in the rock fortress of Massala, first slaying their wives and children that the Romans might triumph over none but the dead, those frantic mutineers who long after the fall of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the people, perpetrated the hideous massacre of harmless Greeks at Cyprus, seem of quite another stock from the novelty-loving Jews who, in the days of the early kings, found an indomitable zest in every new superstition from Memphis or Palmyra. Then comes yet another development of the national character, when, wearied of resistance and crushed by persecution, the Jews became what Christendom has known them, patient, shrewd, quiet traffickers, living in the midst of communities from which they were still severed by the impassable barriers of religion and of caste, useful to, but not identical with, the races that alternately tolerated and oppressed them. In a degree, but a very minor degree, the Armenian and the Parsee resemble the Jew in his more modern type. They, too, are broken nations, with a faith to which they cling tenaciously, but without a home, and they, as well as the Jews of these last days, show signs of a hearty assumption of the political nationality of the countries which permit them to take upon themselves the duties of citizenship. The Dutch or Italian speaking Jew of a hundred and seventy years since, newly re-admitted into the England from which King Edward had driven him at the request of the burghers of London, would have been incredulous of the assertion that his descendants could ever learn to look on Britain as anything but a perching place. The Parsee of Aurungzebe's reign could never have dreamed that seats in the council of India, and possible baronetcies, could be offered to his remote progeny, and still less that they should be willingly accepted. The moral of the old fable has been renewed in the case of these wandering tribes, and the sunshine of prosperity has prevailed with the traveller who wrapped his cloak the tighter about him when the tempest raged the wildest.

The negro has altered less, perhaps, whether mentally or physically, within the historical epoch, than any other equally numerous section of the human race. We see his portraiture on the painted monuments of Egypt, and we recognise it at a glance. What the ancient travellers, the Greek and Arab chroniclers, found him, we find him still, with the same easy good temper, the same indolent indifference to the brain-breaking problems that rouse his white brethren to so much feverish activity, and the same childlike aptitude for being quickly elated or quickly depressed. Those who know the black man best, and who have learned to be fond of him, are often the least sanguine respecting his ultimate future. It is thrift, forethought, the power and the will to provide for the future, that are most deficient in poor Quashee's often amiable disposition. As matters unfortunately stand, the black race, diminishing but too fast even in Africa, is dwindling still more rapidly in North America, as the forthcoming census of the United States will prove with the ghastly distinctness of figures. Yet that the genuine negro, under favourable circumstances, can work, save, and prosper, the instance of Barbadoes will suffice to show.

MY PICTURES.

They gleam upon me from the silent walls.

These mute companions of my darkened life.

Within, the fitful firelight leaps and falls;

Without, the March winds meet in stormy strife.

Over the dazzling page the strained eyes ache,

The pen drops listless from the weary hand,

The spirits of my pictures slowly wake,

And wrapt in memory's halo, round me stand.

There the wild waves crash on the rocky beach;

I gaze upon them till I hear once more

The thunder music on the hollow reach,

E'en as we listened, lingering on the shore;

Here, through the country hush I hear the swell,

I breathe the sea's keen breath through land-locked

air,

And see the feathery spray I love so well,

Light 'mid the heather on the headland there.

That battle scene! I recollect we bent,

To read its tale in Froissart's roll of glory;

Gathering the bright accessories that lend

The flash and glitter to chivalric story.

There, through the bleak east wind, and London smoke,

He brought the eastern tint, the crimson quiver,

As, picturing the scenes of which he spoke,

He drew yon long low banks and mighty river.

There float the angels, each seraphic face

In calm reproving sweetness, stilling woe;

There smile the woodland paths our steps would trace,

In the old happy time, so long ago.

And there, the yearning sorrow to beguile,

From the chill mists that round my vigil rise,

I see our boy's bright curls and joyous smile,

The wistful beauty of our girl's blue eyes.

Oh, Heaven-sent art! Death's icy shadow rests,
 On Nature's spring-like smile and kindred love,
 Only Art's voice its mighty power attests,
 Still memory's pulse and memory's life to prove.
 Yet from his pictures breathes the olden charm,
 Speaking the bliss that was—that yet shall be,
 When earth, and life, and grief, and loss, and harm,
 Fade in the full glow of eternity.

OSSIAN OR NO OSSIAN?

WAS there ever such a person as Ossian, the Celtic Homer, the blind bard of the Gael, who is supposed to have lived and sung, loved and suffered, fourteen or fifteen hundred years ago? If there were no such person, are the poems attributed to him ancient or modern? And, whether ancient or modern, is there any clue to the authorship? Such are the questions which began to be asked in the literary world more than a hundred years ago, which were discussed for more than forty years with a bitterness seldom equalled in literary controversy, and which even now are involved in doubt and uncertainty. The recent publication, under the auspices of the Marquis of Bute, of a luxurious edition of these famous compositions in the original Gaelic, with a new and literal prose translation, by the Reverend Archibald Clerk, of Kilmallie, has revived the long-dormant interest in the subject. For the benefit of those readers who never heard of the acrimonious squabbles of our grandfathers over the name, genius, and authenticity of Ossian, or of those who having heard, have unconsciously allowed their judgment to be swayed by the ruthless or incredulous critics of the Johnsonian era, it may be useful to recapitulate the facts, and try to solve this literary problem with the aid of the new lights that time has thrown over it.

In the year 1759, a young gentleman, Mr. Graham, of Balgowan, afterwards the celebrated general, Lord Lynedoch, was residing at Moffat with his tutor, one James Macpherson, then in his twenty-first year. The tutor had some knowledge of the Gaelic language, and considered himself a poet, as is the habit of clever young men of literary ambition, though he was but a writer of verses which bore but small traces of poetic genius. Among the visitors to Moffat in the summer was John Home, author of the tragedy of Douglas, which held, for a considerable period, a creditable possession of the stage. He had previously enjoyed the acquaintance of Mr. Graham, and made that of his tutor on this occasion. Home had heard from Professor Adam

Ferguson, of Edinburgh, that the people of the Highlands possessed a poetry of their own, of a very high order, which had been handed down orally from generation to generation for hundreds of years. Macpherson corroborated this statement, and explained that he had a few such pieces in his possession. Mr. Home prevailed upon him, not without difficulty, to translate them into English, Macpherson refusing at first, on the plea of his literary inability to do justice to their beauty. Mr. Home took these translations back to Edinburgh, and submitted them to Professor Adam Ferguson, Doctor Robertson, the historian, and Doctor Hugh Blair, the eminent critic and divine. These gentlemen all agreed in their commendation, and expressed their surprise at the existence of such literary treasures, among a people supposed to be so unlettered as the Highlanders. Doctor Blair was more especially excited to admiration, and put himself into communication with Macpherson, urging him to note down from recitation as many of these fast-perishing poems as he could recover from the popular voice, and to translate them into English, promising that he would introduce them to the British public, with the whole weight of his influence and authority. Macpherson had published a poem of his own, entitled the Highlander, a very mediocre composition even for that age of mediocrity and false taste in poetry, and a few ballads and lyrical pieces, of which one entitled the Cave was recognised as the best. The opening stanza of this composition will be a sufficient specimen of his powers:

The wind is up, the field is bare,
 Some hermit leads me to his cell,
 Where Contemplation, lovely fair,
 With blessed Content has chose to dwell.

The late Douglas Jerrold once asserted that what was called poetry was really divisible into three different kinds of composition—poetry, verse, and *worse*. Had he been called upon to pronounce judgment upon Macpherson's poems, he would have included them in the third category. Macpherson himself seems to have come to the conclusion, even at this early period of his career, that though an ardent admirer of poetry, and eminently fitted to appreciate poetry in others, he was neither a born poet nor likely to be converted into one by culture. He constantly expressed to Doctor Blair his inability to do justice to the Gaelic originals, and his doubts whether the public would receive favour-

ably any compositions in a style and on subjects so different from those of modern poetry. Ultimately, however, and mainly owing to the zeal of Doctor Blair, he undertook the task, and a few of the poems were published under Blair's auspices in the year 1760, with the title of *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*, collected in the Highlands of Scotland, translated from the Erse. The fragments were sixteen in number, and purported to be episodes of a narrative poem by Ossian, the son of Fingal, relating to the wars of that hero. The publication, owing to the great authority of Doctor Blair's name as a critic, was triumphantly received in Edinburgh, but did not excite much notice in England. Though the Edinburgh wits, philosophers, and critics, like the Lowland people generally, were not particularly well disposed towards the Highlanders, the patriotic and national spirit was sufficiently strong to induce them to look favourably upon the claim of their country to have produced a Homer. The enthusiasm ran so high in Edinburgh that Macpherson was entreated to take a journey through the Western Highlands and the Hebrides to collect materials for a completer work. He pleaded want of time and want of means. Ultimately, a liberal subscription to defray his expenses was entered into among the leading literati, lawyers, and resident nobility and gentry of Edinburgh, and he set forth upon his tour, furnished with letters of introduction to all the principal Highland proprietors and clergy. He was accompanied by a namesake, but no relative—a Mr. Macpherson, of Strathmashie—who had the reputation of being an excellent Gaelic scholar, which Macpherson himself was not, and whose assistance was considered likely to be useful.

The result of this tour, as stated by the two Macphersons, was a large collection of Gaelic poetry, much of it taken down from recitation, and much recovered in manuscript from the possession of Highland families. When Macpherson returned to Edinburgh he put himself into communication with Doctor Blair and his other friends and contributors. In a letter dated the 16th of January, 1761, he wrote to the Reverend Mr. MacLagan, of Amulree, whom he knew as the possessor of a copious manuscript collection of Gaelic poems, to announce that during his tour "he had been lucky enough to lay his hands on a pretty complete poem, and truly epic, concerning Fingal. The antiquity of

it," he said, "was easily ascertainable, and it was in his opinion not only superior to anything else in the Gaelic language, but not inferior to the more polite performances of other nations in that way." He also announced that he had thoughts of publishing the original Gaelic along with his translation, "if it would not clog the work too much, and if he could procure subscribers." Still encouraged by Doctor Blair, Macpherson completed his translation of Fingal, and proceeded with it to London to solicit the patronage of Lord Bute, the then prime minister. His lordship was not popular among the English, but he was a thorough Scot by blood, education, and spirit, and a great favourite with his own countrymen. The zeal of Macpherson gratified the powerful Scottish nobleman, and he liberally subscribed towards the expenses of the publication. The book appeared early in 1762, in English only, under the title of *Fingal, an Epic Poem, in Six Books, composed by Ossian, the Son of Fingal, translated from the Gaelic Language*. Macpherson declined the publication of the Gaelic on the plea of expense, and on the ground that a sufficient number of subscribers had not entered their names to warrant him in the undertaking. In the following year he published, entirely at the expense of Lord Bute, *Temora*, with five other poems, also purporting to be from the Gaelic of Ossian.

To use the common phrase of the present day, the two works created a great "sensation," and literary society at once ranged itself into two hostile factions, prepared to do desperate battle. It was mainly in England that any doubts of their authenticity were expressed. The Scotch, and more especially the Highlanders, were unpopular. The remembrance of the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745 had not been greatly dimmed by time, and the people of the south too commonly looked upon those of the extreme north as little better than savages—ignorant alike of breeches, manners, and the alphabet. The country was very partially explored by strangers. The great genius of Sir Walter Scott had not arisen—a star of the first magnitude on the literary horizon—to show its beneficent light on those remote regions. The Highlands were not the resort of tourists as they are now, from all parts of the world, and the shooters of grouse and the deer-stalkers did not venture into the country in perceptible numbers. Even the Scotch of Edinburgh and Glasgow looked

upon their northern fellow-countrymen as little better than barbarians. They were reivers, cattle-dealers, highwaymen, and leviers of black-mail, for whom a short shrift and a high gallows were the appropriate doom. The Gaelic, or Erse language, as it was sometimes erroneously called, was declared by Doctor Johnson, who knew nothing about it, to be "gibberish," and in the total ignorance of the philologists of that day of the now well-ascertained fact that Gaelic is not only one of the most ancient, but one of the most beautiful and sonorous languages spoken on the globe, and of close relationship to the Sanscrit and the Hebrew, his dictatorial assertion obtained general credence. The wonder was consequently extreme that such a people should possess such a body of poetry, and from wonder the transition to doubt, to incredulity, and to antagonism, was easy and rapid.

Doctor Blair, and the believers in the authenticity of these poems, supported by a very large number of persons, who looked upon Ossian as a myth of Macpherson's invention, agreed in literary admiration of their merits. Opinion was almost unanimous that, whoever might be their author, and whatever might be their date, the poems were true poems, full of fire, pathos, and dramatic interest; different from all other poems known to the fastidious critics of the eighteenth century; different from the Greek and Roman classics; different from the earliest remnants of Anglo-Saxon romance and English ballad literature; different in style, spirit, imagery, and treatment, from anything previously known. The arguments in support of their authenticity were various. The internal evidence of their antiquity was exceedingly strong. The author or authors seemed to know nothing of cities, or of great congregations of men, except in hosts prepared for battle by land or sea. There was not the faintest trace of Grecian or Roman mythology; such as continually betrayed itself in the previous literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that in a lesser degree interfuses itself into the thought and diction of the nineteenth. There was no allusion to Judaism or Christianity, or to any form of religion, but such as was taught by the Bards and Druids of the time in which the poems purported to have been composed.

There was not the faintest symptom developing itself by accident that the poet was acquainted with southern scenery, or with the scenery of any part of the

world, except that of the wild west Highlands of Scotland, the Hebrides, and the opposite shore of Ireland. All the imagery was appropriate to those regions, and to no other; the mist upon the mountain, the blast upon the loch, or the sea, the storm amid the corries and glens of the everlasting hills, or sweeping over the wide expanse of moorland, purple with heather, or yellow with gorse. The ideas of the Supreme Being, and of the immortality of the soul, were exactly such as prevailed among the Celtic races before the introduction of Christianity, heightened and refined by the culture of the pantheistic bards, and permeated with sad, but exalted thought. The incidents were entirely consistent with the known history and traditions of the earliest ages of Britain, and their episodial treatment and allusions, often slight and unimportant in themselves, were in perfect accordance with each other, and with the main facts elsewhere related. There was not a single anachronism in thought, in style, or in statement. The fourteen centuries which had elapsed since their alleged date of production had not left a mark upon them, except such as might fairly have been attributable to the interpolation of successive reciters, or be as fairly traced to the mind of the modern translator. The poems seemed to be dug out of a remote age—veritable fossils. Over them there lay an indescribable charm of vague sublimity. They were like Glen Coe, whose name the poet assumed, as the voice of Cona, the weirdest glen in Scotland; dark, gloomy, terrific, yet with the murmur of rills and mountain streams running down into the narrow strip of plain and pathway, suggestive of gentleness, and the soft murmur and stir of human life. Independently of their origin, it was impossible for any true and conscientious critic to withhold his admiration. Even the surly Johnson, the enemy of everything that was Scotch, acknowledged that it would be "pleasing to believe that Fingal lived and that Ossian sang."

The continental critics, as soon as the poems were translated into French, Italian, German, and other European languages, were unanimous in the expression of their delight, and two great men, Napoleon Bonaparte in France, and Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of American Independence, publicly declared that they preferred Ossian to all other poetry. Napoleon always carried a copy with him in his campaigns, and Jefferson undertook

the study of Gaelic in order that he might read his favourite bard in the original. Goethe was equally charmed and captivated. The enthusiasm of the lovers of poetry—altogether independent of the authorship—was amply justified by the beauty of the composition, rivalling in many instances the noblest passages in the Psalms of David, the prophecies of Isaiah, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah. What, for instance, could be finer, asked the critics—and we in our day may well repeat the question—than the passage in Carthon, when the blind Ossian, attended by the lovely Malvina, the widow of his lost son Oscar, apostrophises the sun, in language of which the perfect rhythm would be marred by the useless meretriciousness of rhyme?

Oh thou that rollest above,
Round as the shield of my fathers,
Whence are thy beams, oh sun,
Thine everlasting light?
Thou comest forth in thine awful beauty,
And the stars hide themselves in the sky.
The moon, cold and pale,
Sinks in the western wave;
But thou thyself movest alone.
Who can be a companion of thy course?
The oaks of the mountain fall,
The mountains themselves decay with years,
The ocean shrinks and grows again,
The moon herself is lost in heaven,
But thou art for ever the same,
Rejoicing in the brightness of thy course.
When the world is dark with tempests,
When thunder rolls and lightning flies,
Thou lookest in thy beauty from the clouds,
And laughest at the storm.
But to Ossian thou lookest in vain.
He beholds thy beams no more,
Whether thy yellow hair flies in the eastern clouds,
Or thou tremblest at the gates of the west.
But thou art perhaps like me, but for a season,
And thy years will have an end.
Thou shalt sleep in thy clouds,
Careless of the voice of the morning.
Exult then, oh sun, in the strength of thy youth!

This passage is but one of a multitude that might be cited, yet of itself it is sufficient to prove that the author—whether he were Ossian or a man of modern time—was a true poet. Most of our books of *Elegant Extracts*, and *Selections of Poetry*, contain passages from Ossian. Every reader of taste will know where to find them.

It is proverbially impossible to prove a negative. Those who denied the authenticity and the personality of Ossian, and there are those, and they belong to a very influential school of criticism, who deny to this day the authenticity and personality of Homer, took refuge in affirmation, and maintained not only that no such poems as those attributed to Ossian ever existed in Gaelic, but that James Macpherson was

their author; or, if not wholly their author, that he linked together a few small fragments of undoubted Gaelic poetry, and made them the foundation of a greater structure, which was the work of his own mind. The merit of the poems being acknowledged, the compliment to Macpherson's genius was a very high one; but that it was wholly undeserved was evident to any one who had compared the English compositions of which Macpherson was most proud, such as the *Highlander* and the *Cave*, with the English version of Ossian, of which he never boasted. The difference between copper and gold, between glass and diamonds, between water and wine, between cold and heat, is not more obvious than that between Macpherson in his own name, as an original author, and Macpherson as the translator of Ossian.

It is possible that the controversy which the publication evoked would, after a few years, have died away, had it not been for the impetus given to it by the warm attack made, not only on Macpherson, but on all Scotsmen, by Doctor Samuel Johnson, who roundly stated, in his *Tour to the Hebrides*, "that the poems of Ossian never existed in any other form than that which we have seen (the English); that the editor or author never could show the original, nor could it be shown by any other person; that the poems were too long to be remembered; that the Gaelic was formerly an unwritten language; that Macpherson doubtless inserted names that circulated in popular stories; that he might have translated some wandering ballads, if any such could be found; and that, though some men of undoubted integrity professed to have heard parts of the poems, they had all heard them in their boyhood, and none of them could recollect or recite as many as six lines." He added, with his usual venomous, though amusing, prejudice against the Scottish people, "that though the Scots had something to plead for their easy reception of an improbable fiction, they were seduced by their fondness for their supposed ancestors. A Scotchman," he said, "must be a very sturdy moralist who does not love Scotland better than truth; he will always love it better than inquiry; and if falsehood flatters his vanity, he will not be very diligent to detect it." Macpherson's reply to this insolent attack was a challenge to fight a duel, which the unwieldy lexicographer thought it prudent to decline. The reply of the Scottish literati who believed in Ossian, and of the High-

landers generally, was more satisfactory. Macpherson's alleged inability to exhibit the original Gaelic was disposed of by the fact that he had left the manuscripts for several months at the shop of Mr. Becket, the publisher in Edinburgh, to be shown to all inquirers, and especially to such as were desirous to subscribe for their publication; that few persons looked at them, and fewer still subscribed; that as to there being no one in the Highlands who could recite six lines of Gaelic poetry, there were many then living who could repeat six hundred or a thousand lines, and that one gentleman, the Reverend Doctor Macqueen, had procured from Alexander Macpherson, in Skye, a person known for his great memory as a reciter of Ossian, a quarto manuscript, an inch and a quarter in thickness, known as the *Leabhar Dearg*, or Red Book, which contained a portion of the story of Fingal, which book was handed to James Macpherson, and was translated by him. In short, a whole cloud of witnesses appeared to rebut the charges, including persons who could recite long detached passages of the poems in the original language, and Gaelic scholars who brought forward manuscript copies, which had long been in their families, of parts of the poems. Ultimately the Highland Society of London sanctioned and aided the publication of the Gaelic text, with a Latin translation by the Reverend Robert Macfarlane, in three quarto volumes. To this publication the celebrated Sir John Sinclair contributed an exhaustive introduction, in which he related the whole history of the sources whence the Gaelic poems were derived. This work did not appear until the year 1807, and if Doctor Johnson, the great opponent of the Celtic claim to the possession of a Homer, had survived so long, there was evidence to convince even him of the error into which his prejudice had led him, if not gracefully to acknowledge it.

In short, every argument that was, or may be still, urged against the authenticity of Ossian's poems, may be used against the authenticity of Homer's, or any other book that has descended to the world from remote antiquity. Ossian may never have existed. Ossian's poems, as now extant in Gaelic, may not be verbally, or, in every respect, the same as the poems which proceeded from Ossian's mind, if we go so far as to admit Ossian's existence. Some of the poems may not have been Ossian's at all, and successive bards in successive ages may have imprinted their own charac-

teristics upon the ancient compositions, which they recited for the delight of their auditors in the days when there were no books. But exactly the same may be said of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. If it be impossible to prove the existence of Ossian, it is equally impossible to prove that Homer was not a myth. And whether Ossian or Homer ever lived and sung, it is alike certain that the Gael and the Greeks produced the poems which have been attributed, truly or falsely, to those real or imaginary authors. A question of literary identity, that goes back for centuries anterior to the invention of printing, can never be authoritatively settled, so as to leave no room for denial or incredulity. And as regards Ossian, whoever he may or may not have been, one thing is all but certain—his poems were not, as Johnson and the English critics of the eighteenth century took a malicious delight in asserting, the works of James Macpherson. They were known, in scattered and multifarious fragments, long before he was born, and, though he understood Gaelic sufficiently to be able to translate it into English, he was not only incapable of writing good Gaelic, but of writing in English such poetry as is contained in the epic story of Fingal, and in the minor and perhaps more beautiful stories of Carthon and Temora. Though his translation, on the whole, is spirited and vivid, it is not always correct, and in numberless instances does injustice to the original. Macpherson at his death bequeathed a thousand pounds for the publication of the Gaelic, and, thanks to the learning, zeal, and energy of successive editors, among whom the last, the Reverend Mr. Clerk, is not the least eminent, the text has been finally settled, to the satisfaction of Gaelic scholars, and remains an imperishable monument of the genius of the Celtic people.

One assertion of the disbelievers in Ossian remains to be considered, namely, that, beyond a few undoubted Gaelic fragments that were current among the people of the Highlands before the birth of Macpherson, all the rest of the poems were translated from Macpherson's English, after the publication of Doctor Blair's treatise. To a certain extent the charge is true, for Macpherson undoubtedly pieced his fragments together, and could not exhibit the Gaelic for every line in his book. But this being granted, the poems of Ossian still remain as much Ossian's as the *Iliad* is Homer's; for in the days succeeding

those of Homer exactly the same process of preservation and, if a part were lost, of renovation and completion, must have been adopted by the successive reciters by whom the poems, as we now possess them, were handed down, till they were finally fixed in the form of an authentic manuscript. The only real question in our day is as to the more or less of Macphersonism that Macpherson inserted into the ancient poems. This point can never be satisfactorily settled; but from all that is known, and that is every day elicited by the Gaelic critics, who are alone competent to pass an opinion, it appears to be clear that whenever Macpherson meddled he muddled, and that the finest passages are of undoubted antiquity, and if not the composition of Ossian, of some other bard or bards as worthy as he to rank among great poets.

COLONIAL LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

AFRICA is not all sand and lions, nor do serpents and cannibals constitute the major part of its population. My surprise was great on first coming to Natal en route to the diamond country to find it greener than even the Emerald Isle. It lies before me now as I write, rolling wave after wave of green—every shade of green, too; not mere young corn-fields or monotonous meadows. Here the cane-brakes, there the spring pastures; in the distance rise the coffee-bushes and the great, broad, flapping, split-leaved bananas, so generous in their lavish growth.

Natal is the very garden of Pomona. Oranges and limes roll about in green and golden profusion. The finest pine-apples, worth ever so much money in Covent Garden, sell here at a penny each, and there is a reduction to the greedy epicure who takes a quantity. The only true way to eat a pine-apple is to take one into a quiet, shady, unobserved corner, like that selfish and contemptible individual, little Jack Horner, and then and there to scoop it out like an egg, all by yourself, not giving even your nearest relation a bit. The result is paradisiacal, for the aroma is worthy of the fruit of Eden. Oranges sell at from one and sixpence to two shillings a hundred; however, residents seldom buy such things, but send empty baskets to their friends' gardens to be filled, for the friends are grateful to be relieved of their overflowing treasure. Fruit is, nevertheless, almost an essential of life in Southern Africa, for scurvy is common among the new settlers,

and this disagreeable disease is best exorcised by a liberal use of vegetables, fruit, and lemonade, the proper diet of the country. If hardy Norsemen will come to Africa, and there continue the potatoes useful, or at least harmless, in the cold misty North, they must take the consequence and pay the damages. Indian corn, a staple in America, and most delicious of all grain when prepared in the Indian way as hominy, is imported in large quantities into Natal, and there given as the universal food to the Kaffre labourers, also to man's humbler Darwinian kinsmen, the horses, pigs, and fowls. The cobs of the young green maize, most admirable and nutritious of vegetables, is preferred to bread by the Anglo-African children. The sweet potato (something between a parsnip and a waxy potato) is much cultivated at Natal, and, being cheap and decidedly filling, it is a useful vegetable for a thrifty household.

The climate of the South of Africa is not so hot as the poets make it. It is neither liquid fire, nor quite glass-house heat. On the contrary, it is steady, bright, and sunny, and not at all too warm for Anglo-Indians, whose blood has once been up at the top of the thermometer. People at Natal like nothing under seventy-five degrees. In summer we range between seventy degrees and eighty degrees, very rarely rising to ninety; and the mornings and evenings are so agreeably fresh and cool, that we never feel the prostrating lassitude that one experiences in hot, close weather in a stivy English town. The atmosphere is always deliciously pure, and the sky deeply and intensely blue. Heaven seems further off here than in England, and its outer court more beautiful and vast. Christmas weather is generally extremely hot. Sitting with fruit before us, we fan ourselves, and think of our dear friends in merry old England, wrapped up to the nose, and busy at their roast beef and terrible national pudding. Patriotism apart, and coaxed immediately after a heavy national dinner, I think many a John Bull would be glad to exchange his English beef and fog for African sunshine and bananas. The African winter is delightful, not unlike a fine warm English May, no rain to pour or drizzle, no gusts of bronchitis, no grey leaden clouds, but a cloudless, laughing sky, and the most lovely moonlight nights. Moreover, the moon is twice as large as the moon in England, and three times as bright. The African winter day is about two hours shorter than the summer day, that is, the sun sets in winter at five

A.M., and in summer at seven o'clock. A cheerful blazing wood fire, on an African winter evening, is cosy, and not to be despised, especially when one can sit over it and read long letters just arrived from England. Some of the Natal houses have no fire-places, but this is a lamentable mistake, and sometimes drives chilly tenants to the Cognac bottle. The great rains fall in summer, and are welcomed especially by the cotton farmers and coffee planters, as the crops then leap up as if by magic. These rains temper the otherwise great heat, and refreshingly cool the air. My farm bailiff in Surrey used to say, that if he superintended the weather office he would make all the rain fall on Sunday. Nature here, though less severe on the poor man's holiday, is quite as methodical, for it generally rains during an African summer two or three times a week, and generally in the evening or night, so that it neither interferes with business nor pleasure.

The soil at Natal is as rich as if it had been lying fallow since the Deluge, which indeed much of it has. We can get two crops a year from the same field. Potatoes put forth their nightshade (purple and yellow) blossom, fade, and quickly develop their clean-looking tubers. Indian corn shoots up rank and cane-like, and soon the great bunchy headed cobs ripen and turn golden. We then hoe the ground over and plant oats. These we do not allow to ripen, but cut them green, and sell them at a remunerative price as forage for horses. Pigs and poultry thrive at Natal, though the latter are subject to epidemics, difficult to cure, the cause of which is as yet uncertain. Disease is also common among the Anglo-African oxen and horses. The general opinion, however, of the older settlers is, that these ailments chiefly arise from the carelessness, and recklessness, and ignorance of the lower class of settlers.

Let me describe Durban, the town where we live. Durban is situated on the banks of a large bay, about two miles from its narrow entrance, called the Point, where the vessels lie. There is a bold headland opposite the Point called the Bluff, and on it is a lighthouse. We had heard a good deal during our voyage out of the horrors of the bar, but the day we arrived it was as smooth as a lake, in fact there was no bar visible at all, so our good ship was at once towed safely in to her anchorage. In summer the bay looks very cheerful, dotted over as it is with yachts: there are frequent regattas, and great excitement prevails amongst the boating and betting

men. The beach round the bay is a pleasant ride. Strangers are surprised to see so many equestrians cantering about in every direction, for every one in Natal rides, after a fashion, and it speaks volumes for the horses that there are no accidents. Horses are indeed very cheap, especially since the exodus to the diamond fields, and their feeding is a trifle. Your Kaffre cuts the grass every day, and a feed of maize keeps the horse in good condition. The sand is too heavy for walking (at least so Durban people say); people, therefore, ride the shortest distances. There are races every year; and the South African colonist need not be dull. A fancy little railway runs from the Point to Durban. It is as unlike an English railway as it can well be, for there are no accidents and it pays good dividends. Durban is rather a foreign-looking little town, for the coolies help to give it an Oriental look with their gay clothing of many colours. The Kaffres, dusky and taller, are a powerful race of men.

The lumbering African waggon, with its team of oxen, surprises the new comer, and rouses thoughts of strange travel. Trees shade either side of the principal street, and there are excellent shops where you can procure necessities and luxuries. The latest fashions come out to Natal, so the South African is only two months behind London and Paris. The houses are all built with verandahs, which are very cool and useful, affording an additional half-open room on a warm day. There is an excellent hotel in Durban, and the charges are very moderate. Breakfast, tiffin, and dinner, consisting of fish, soup, meat, curries, puddings, and fruit, cost at the hotel only six or seven shillings a day, including lodging. There is also a good club. Fish is very plentiful and cheap. Beef fourpence a pound; mutton, sixpence; coffee, one shilling; sugar very cheap; tea comes from the Cape and Australia; flour is one pound at present for the hundred-weight. Beyond Durban extends the flat, about a mile across; then comes the Beren, where many of the merchants and others employed during the day in town reside. This is a hill, covered with the luxuriant growth of trees, underwood, and flowering shrubs, called in Natal "bush." There is a church here, where the service is carefully performed. Paths intersect the Beren in every direction, and villas and cottages peep out, each with a garden more or less extensive. Some of these houses have magnificent views in front, looking down on the thick bush, with

its varied tints, and over the flat and the town, to the wide blue expanse of the Indian Ocean, and in the other direction to the beautiful valley of the Ilengeni river, while in the far distance the Jesanda mountains show purple against the sky, with their table-like flat tops reminding one of the Abyssinian hills. The Kaffres do all the laborious work of a house; chop wood, which costs nothing on the coast, go messages, and make themselves "generally useful." They would become good servants, but are too often spoiled by the class of settlers who at home would be servants themselves. These new comers treat the Kaffre one day with familiarity, and the next with harshness; consequently many of the natives become rude in their bearing, if they think they can safely venture on being so. The best way is to get raw, untrained Kaffres from their kraals, and train them into habits of respect and obedience. Kaffres get through a good day's work with a white man to superintend them. Their wages are from eight shillings to twelve shillings per month. They do not remain long in your service at one time, say nine months or a year; then they pack up and go back to their kraals, to see how things are going on, and spend a holiday with their wives and children. If you are a good master they will after that return to you and work for another spell. You do not see Kaffre girls in the town, but you meet them sometimes in the suburban roads. They are well made and shapely, with a good erect carriage, and by no means bad features; but the Kaffre maid-servant looks a terrible awkward shambling Topsy in European dress, and very unlike the graceful robed coolie women.

There is a very pretty little town where the governor resides with all the officials. The streets are wide, and shaded by seringatrees. The band of the regiment stationed in Natal plays once a week on the promenade. There is a great deal of business done in Maritzburgh with the Dutch from the Transvaal. People at home know very little of the divisions of the African colonies, and think that the old Cape colonies, Port Elizabeth and Natal, are all one. Natal people, however, don't like to be asked in letters from home, "Are you going to the Cape to look for diamonds?" The diamonds are as near Natal as the Cape, perhaps nearer. It is a point in dispute, and Natal, at all events, is not in the Cape Colony at all. It is a compact little state of itself, with its own governor, judges, secretaries, place-hunters, and bishops.

Rapid travellers writing skimming tours, and taking stock of half the globe, come out to Natal, race from the Hotel at Durban to the one at Maritzburgh, collect a few imperfectly digested facts, spin a theory or two, contrast us with the Cape, never go into a sugar-mill, never visit a coffee plantation, do not even ride through the Beren, then fly home and write an elaborate account of the colony, and an accurate photograph it generally proves to be!

TWO SIDES OF A STORY.

NED'S SECOND CHAPTER. CHANGES.

AFTER that things went on much as usual, except that Gretchen and I were happy in the security of our love. We said nothing to any one of the plight that had passed between us. The only difference was that I resolved boldly to attempt to make myself known to Mr. Fairfax. I learned that he was frequently sober, and often at such times was quite mild, and even good natured. I watched my opportunities, and picked up an acquaintance with him in his more self-respecting moments. I found him agreeable in his manners, polite, and well informed; but I also readily perceived that he was greedy and unprincipled. He had a handsome beard and a graceful cast of features, and had he been suitably clothed would have looked perfectly the fine gentleman. I succeeded so far in winning his goodwill, that I came and went at the cottage when and how I pleased.

Very seldom, indeed, did I find him about the place. Often he had not been seen there for a day, or for many days. If Gretchen forbore to tell me of this, Kitty was sure to announce it. Yet, in spite of all drawbacks, these visits of mine were occasions of high jubilee. I always found the three little sisters awaiting me in their trimmest order, though, sometimes, there were but two sisters, for Kitty, like her father, was a rover.

There was a certain Lady Bernard, who was a very rich old woman, and she had taken a fancy to Kitty, and would give her money and presents, and take her to drive with her in her carriage. She would have her very often to spend a day with her, to sing and dance, and act parts for her amusement. For Kitty had a fine voice, and was a capital mimic. Often when I was leaving the cottage of an evening I met Kitty returning home, attended by Lady Bernard's own maid. On these occasions Kitty held her head very high, and hardly saluted me. And if she came a

little earlier she ridiculed our supper-table, telling us with a great air of Lady Bernard's style of living. Sometimes she had an apple, or a handful of bon-bons for Fan, and then the little one was so charmed that I almost forgave Kitty her selfishness and her scornful want of tact. It took almost all Kitty's time, while she was not at Lady Bernard's, to make ready for the next occasion, when she should be summoned to the side of her patroness. She employed herself generally in ripping and sewing, cutting and settling old remnants of finery which Lady Bernard bestowed on her. She had a wonderful taste for a fantastic sort of dress-making, and to see Kitty setting out for Lady Bernard's, arranged in a costume of her own curious design, was to see a picture; not a picture of as high a class as my Gretchen in her dingy gown, but still a brilliant little picture, full of life and grace.

Sometimes of a morning I called for Gretchen, and found her gone to work before me. Then I generally beheld Kitty as I approached the cottage, seated in the window at her dress-making, with the curtain put aside, so that she might see and be seen by the people on the road. At such times Fan was moving about the place like a tiny household fairy. Mounted on a stool, so as to have command of the table, she shred the vegetables for the dinner, or she was sweeping the floor, or arranging the cupboards. She was a slender little creature, who looked as if you could blow her off your hand, but with spirit enough for a giant stirring in her great brown eyes. Gretchen was the little creature's idol. She would work like a busy bee all day long that Gretchen might have some comfort in the evening. Never was there a stronger human tie than was knit between these two little sisters of seven and seventeen.

It was some time before I was sharp enough to perceive that Fan was one of those tender human flowers that, though exquisite in their promise, never get past the bud. I had thought that as a matter of course she would grow up into girlhood, just as Gretchen had done, and Kitty. But little Fan was never born to be a woman.

"Oh, Kitty, do come and help me with this saucepan!" I heard her cry one morning as I came into the cottage.

"You tiresome little monkey!" was the answer. "Why don't you grow big?"

"I think the pain in my side will never let me grow big."

Fan's grave answer came with a child's sigh to me through the half-closed door.

"Don't be a goose!" said Kitty. "It's only indigestion. Whenever I eat venison at Lady Bernard's I get a pain just like that. Lady Bernard only laughs, and says it's indigestion."

And Kitty shook out some trimmings and gave all her attention to them.

"But I never tasted venison in my life, Kitty dear."

I entered and interrupted the conversation. Fan was standing gazing at her saucepan, with her small hand pressed against her side, and a look of patient pain upon her childish face. I think I knew from that moment about the end of little Fan. She flew to my side. Her head was scarcely higher than the level of my hand, and she had a trick of kissing my hand by way of greeting.

I watched her very closely after this, and was prepared for Gretchen's anguish when the truth first broke upon her.

"Ned," she said one day as we walked home together, "Ned, I want to speak to you. Fan—"

Her voice broke and she turned away her head.

"What is it?" I said, but I knew all about it very well. She struggled in silence awhile, and then gathered up her strength.

"Oh, Ned, Fan is going to die!"

"I trust not," I said, but I knew that I was a hypocrite when I said it. For Fan was fading away from us like a snow-drop in the sun.

Then we had pinching and saving to make up enough money to bring Fan to a famous doctor. The doctor shook his head and suggested the South of France. So we threw away our guineas, and brought the little patient home again to wrestle awhile for life.

It took her a whole year to die. During that time Gretchen was scarcely seen in our workroom. I carried her work to her, and brought it home when it was finished. Kitty was a bad nurse, and could not be relied upon. Almost all my evenings were spent at the cottage. Mr. Fairfax was seldom there, and, when there, he moaned perpetually over the troubles of his family. One would have thought to hear him that he had been a tender and industrious father, whose efforts were defeated by the unkindness of the world. He spent his days in gambling, and I knew that Gretchen shrank from taking the few odd coins which he gave her from time to time towards the

housekeeping. He was always glad to see me, and to borrow what little moneys I might chance to have about me. And this was a misfortune, for all my odd shillings were kept for dainties for Fan. When Mr. Fairfax got possession of them they were heard of never more.

It was during this year of Fan's dying that my very odd relative, whom I have spoken of before, sent for me to visit him, in a very formal manner. The event took me by surprise, as for a very long time he had not taken any notice of me. I went to dine with him, as I was bidden, upon a certain Wednesday, and the day was in itself worthy of note, as I never before had visited him, but on a Sunday, in my life. On former occasions he and I had been tête-à-tête, but now the dinner was a banquet, and the company very large. I felt rather out of place in my shabby undress coat. My relative smiled on me, however, and gave me a seat by his side. When the company were going he pressed me to remain.

When all had disappeared he drew his chair to the fireside, and bade me to do the same.

"Tell me," he said, "how do you think I am looking?"

"Only pretty well I think, sir," I said.

"That's an honest man: Yonder scoundrels all swore I never looked better in my life. But I am not even pretty well, so I am going to make my will."

"I hope you will live long to enjoy everything you have," I said.

"Well, you needn't; for I am not going to do anything of the kind. I tell you again that I am going to make my will."

"Are you, sir?" I said.

"Yes, I am, sir. And that's the fact that I want to bring before you. I have enjoyed my wealth well, but I have never squandered it, and I have got to leave it behind me. It is no mean inheritance. What I want to know is, am I to leave it to you or not?"

"Oh, sir!" was all I could articulate. A crowd of delightful ideas went whirling through my head. Gretchen—a wedding—Fan—the South of France. Good-bye to the wretched cottage and Mr. Fairfax. "Oh, sir!" I faltered, "do not tantalize me."

"Don't run too fast," he said, dryly; "there is a condition, I must tell you."

"A condition, sir?" What is it?" I felt ready to promise anything, possible or impossible.

"Only this," he said, "you are to swear never to marry. I will not have my money squandered by a woman. If you agree to my condition you shall have all that I possess. If you will not agree to it you shall have nothing."

I turned sick and dizzy. For a moment I pictured myself a rich man without Gretchen. But no; life without Gretchen would be like sand in a hungry mouth.

"Think well of it, young man!"

"I could not give her up, sir."

"Her? Is there a 'her' in the case already? Then that settles the matter. The money must go to the other one. How old are you, young man?"

"I am going on for twenty."

"And the other one is going on for fifty, I should think. If he has lived all this time without being so foolish as to marry, he deserves his good fortune, as you deserve your ill luck."

I knew very well who was meant by the "other one." He was a Sutherland by name, though no nearer by blood to my relative than I. He was the scamp of the family, and early in life had committed a fraud on account of which he had had to run away from England. He had not been heard of for years, and seemed to have dropped out of the world. But my odd old gentleman had never forgotten his existence, and it was from my guardian's conversation that I knew that this Sutherland had been born, had misbehaved, and had not yet died. Where he was, and how he lived, nobody seemed to know.

"The chances are against him," the old gentleman went on, "and there is still a hope for you. If he be married he gets nothing, and I never yet knew a ne'er-do-well who had not a wife and twenty children. He shall be sought for when I am gone, and if found to be a bachelor he is my heir. If it be proved that he is dead, or that he ever had a wife, then you are to get everything I have. Now good-night, young man, and I am sorry you are a fool!"

I did not tell Gretchen quite the truth about this affair. I told her my guardian's fortune was to go to a distant relation, of whom no one knew anything. I told her the conditions of his heirship, and of my chances in the matter. Many a time we laughed and speculated on the subject. Fan, on her sick-bed, amused herself building castles in the air. She prattled of it so often that her father overheard her.

"What is this fortune that you are

getting?" he said to me one evening, when I had met him, quite sober, on the road. "What does it mean?"

"Not much," I said; and told him the state of affairs. But I did not mention Gretchen. I had not chosen to promise against marriage, that was all.

"You are a fool!" he said, emphatically. "If I were in your place! And who is this old tyrant? And who is the lucky man who will get the money instead of you?"

I felt reluctant to give names, but Mr. Fairfax had fastened on the story, and was full of curiosity.

"My friend is called Sutherland," I admitted at last, "and I know nothing of the other except the facts I have told you; and that he bears the family name."

"Sutherland!" echoed Mr. Fairfax, "Sutherland!" He turned red, then white, then green in the face. "Sutherland!" He looked like a man who was going to have a fit.

"Yes," I said, "Sutherland. Good Heavens! Mr. Fairfax, what is the matter with you?"

He recovered himself quickly. "Matter with me?" he said. "Nothing is the matter with me. But I once knew a man called Sutherland. It must have been the same. Poor Sutherland! poor Sutherland! He was a married man."

Almost immediately after this he left me abruptly upon "business."

Some days afterwards I went into the cottage, and found an unusual scene going on among the sisters.

"I am sure," Kitty was saying, "it is very strange of you not to be more pleased. The expense of me will be quite off your hands, and, besides, I shall be such a credit to the family."

Kitty, standing in the middle of the floor, thus harangued her two sisters, who were clinging together on Fan's little couch. Tears were rolling heavily down Gretchen's face. Fan had her lips pressed to the elder sister's hand, while she looked wistfully and reproachfully at the other.

"Now look you here, brother Ned," said Kitty, triumphantly, as if glad to see a reasonable being to whom she could state her case. "Here is Gretchen fretting and crying about the finest piece of luck that ever befel this miserable house. Lady Bernard wants to adopt me, and take me for her daughter. There never was such good fortune heard of except in the fairy tales."

"Wait a little, Kitty," I said, "Gretchen will get used to it. This is a very great blessing, and nobody ought to object to it."

Gretchen looked at me, and her tears came down afresh.

"There's the way she goes on," cried Kitty, tossing her head impatiently. "It is jealous and unkind of her, that's what I think."

"Oh, no, no, Kitty!" murmured Gretchen.

"Go away, Kitty. Go off to Lady Bernard," cried Fan. "And Gretchen, you have still got little me. Don't cry, lovey sweet! Never fear but I will stick to you."

The little creature meant it. She thought nothing of the long parting that was at hand.

"I shall often come to see you," said Kitty, a little touched, "and I shall be able to bring some nice things for Fan, I dare say. It would be a dreadful pity to miss such a good thing for the family."

The good thing was not missed. Kitty went to live with Lady Bernard, and her visits to the shabby cottage were few and far between. And Gretchen bravely put away her sorrow, for Fan was going to die, and it needed all Gretchen's courage to help the little sister through this strait. It took all her nerve, and the nerve of one who was stronger, and ought to have been braver than herself. Many a night we sat up, holding the little hands, and wetting the parched lips. Fan made a generous will, and left me to Gretchen, and left Gretchen to me. "Kitty will be sure to be all right," she said. "She always told us she would make a shift for herself."

Kitty had made a very good shift indeed. Sometimes she came to us, dressed in handsome clothes, and bringing grapes or wine, or some other delicacy. But her visits were rare, and she thought more of the things she brought than of noting the changes in Fan. I think she would have come oftener, only she did not like to appear to us without gifts in her hands. She was too elegant a young lady for us now. Her silk dress was easily hurt, and her delicate kid gloves would not readily come off. She had never more than ten minutes to stay at a time, for the carriage was always waiting for her to drive her with Lady Bernard to the park. She grew tall and sleek in the course of a few months, and looked very fair and lovely in her handsome clothes. I could not but own, when I saw her beside Gretchen, that a gem is all the more beautiful for being

richly set. Yet my chosen love in her threadbare gown was all the dearer and holier to me for this thought.

It was agonising, that parting between the two little sisters. Fan held on to Gretchen while the death-struggle was rending her, till the frail spirit was overcome and borne away, and only pulseless hands were found clasping Gretchen's neck. And then we laid her out, and put lilies on her breast, and Kitty came to see her and cried a good deal. The father was not at home, and we quite forgot to miss him. Before the day of burial we had wondered about him a little. A whole week passed and we did not see him or hear from him. Gretchen was troubled, thinking of the shock that was in store for him. I was not uneasy. I thought that, like Kitty, he would be sure to make a shift for himself.

We laid our dead in a very humble grave, and Kitty dried her tears and went back to Lady Bernard. It was a comfort to her, she said, to remember about the grapes which she had been able to bring. Gretchen's cheeks were white, and her strength was worn out, but she thought she had done nothing for little Fan.

So Gretchen was left alone; for her father did not come back. Weeks passed away, and still there were no tidings of him. For the comfort of his daughter I searched and advertised—made every effort within my power to get a trace of the missing man. All exertions were fruitless. Mr. Fairfax was either dead, or had deserted. Gretchen believed the former; I, the latter.

In the midst of this perplexity Kitty went abroad with Lady Bernard. It was uncertain when she might return, as her protectress had some idea of settling in France. Her sister was married there, and lived in a pretty old château with a family of lively French children about her. Kitty was full of pleasant anticipations, and could scarcely tear herself away from her own delightful thoughts to remember Gretchen's loneliness and needs. But she promised to write frequently, and what more could one expect?

It was also at this time that I heard the news of my guardian's death. He had died, as he had expected, suddenly, of a fit of apoplexy. The arrangements as to his will had not been made too soon. To me

had been left the sum of fifty pounds, to take me to Paris, where he knew I had long wished to study art. And Henry Sutherland—the “other one”—was his heir.

This man was truly the heir, for he had suddenly appeared, and was just in good time to claim his inheritance, being, fortunately for himself, unmarried, and totally unencumbered. He had turned up, in the oddest way, just before the late Mr. Sutherland's death, and had visited the deceased, and been recognised by him. So he was the lucky man; and this was the end of our little day-dream.

The white-headed butler gave me these details when I called at the door to inquire about the funeral. I was too much disappointed to enter the place, or to run the risk of meeting the new Mr. Sutherland.

“A fine figgur of a gen'leman he is, sir,” said the old man. “Hextremely ‘an’some, if it warn’t for too ‘igh a blush about the nose. Lucky for him, sir, as how he never tried matrimony!”

“That’s as may be,” I said, sagely. But I sighed a little as I walked down the steps. The sigh was more for Gretchen’s sake than my own.

And now came the question of what Gretchen was to do with herself. We looked in each other’s faces and knew we dared not marry. We made our little plan, and agreed to be as cheerful as we could in carrying it out. I was to go to Paris, and Gretchen was to wait patiently till such time as I could come back and begin life as an artist. I found her a home with a respectable and kindly woman, and she returned to her work in Mr. Jackson’s room.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LIII. THE DOCTOR RETURNS.

THE laughter of this uncomfortable Mercy Creswell remained in Maud Vernon's ears. She would have fancied that there was something odd about Lady Mardykes's house, if she had not known, by inference, from her mother, and directly from Maximilla Medwyn, that it was in every way unexceptionable. The woman could hardly have been tipsy. So Maud referred her unexplained merriment to something ridiculous which might have befallen in her own social level, the recollection of which irresistibly tickled her.

Lady Vernon was happier that day. A letter had reached her from her true, but hardly loving, friend, old Richard Dawe. It told her that Captain Vivian had made an excursion, he knew not whither, on the day on which he had passed through the town of Roydon; but that he had returned the same evening, and that the doctor having pronounced that he had been doing too much, he, Mr. Dawe, had exacted a promise from him, not again to attempt a journey for ten days. He had named that time particularly, in consequence of Lady Vernon's letter.

"I am not qualified," he said, "to speak about such feelings; but I will say, cure yourself of your excessive fondness for that young man. You have placed yourself in an agonising position. Make the effort; see him no more. I spare you. Commiserate yourself."

Notwithstanding its severe tone and unpalatable advice, this letter had cheered her. Maud would have left Roydon before his possible return. Her soul may have acquiesced, in secret, in the wisdom of old

Dawe's advice. But it was the recognition of one beholding himself in a glass, and straightway oblivion followed.

Lady Vernon had some charitable visits to pay, on two days in the week, in Roydon. Some fifty pensioners, more or less decayed, endured her occasional calls and lectures in consideration of the substantial comforts that attended a place on her list. On some days she would visit two, on others nearly a score.

Lady Vernon filled the rôle of the Christian matron with punctilious completeness. She had her great charities and her small; her tens of thousands to bestow, and her sixpences; her influential committees and powerful societies, and her grumbling and querulous old women in their garrets. She would make a flannel petticoat or build a church.

Lady Vernon bore herself to all her friends and acquaintances as an unexceptionable type of Christian life. She would tell herself, as she meditated in her solitude, that she could not remember having ever acted, in a single instance, contrary to her conscience.

Lady Vernon had violated authority a little once or twice. She and authority had differed, and she had taken her own course. But who was right, she or authority? Need I say?

Of course she had things to vex her. She had more; secret afflictions and dreadful recollections, of which but one person now living, except herself, knew anything.

For years she had been silently, though unconsciously, battling with remorse. She was battling with the same fiend now. But was not Satan writhing under her heel? Did she not stand, resting on her spear, unscathed in her panoply, like the angel of wisdom, purity, and courage? What were

these internal questionings, doubtings, and upbraidings, but the malignant sophistries of the Evil One accusing the just?

Lady Vernon had made two or three of her domiciliary visits, and was emerging from between the poplars that stood one at each side of old Mr. Martin's door, when her eye lighted upon the figure of Doctor Malkin, in his black frock-coat, newly arrived from his journey, looking a little fagged, but smiling politely, and raising his hat.

The doctor had just made his toilet, and was on his way to Roydon Hall to pay his respects to his patroness.

Lady Vernon smiled, but looked suddenly a little paler, as she saw her family physician thus unexpectedly near her.

"How d'ye do, Doctor Malkin? I did not think you could have been home so early," said Lady Vernon. "You intend calling at Roydon Hall to-day?"

"I was actually on my way," said Doctor Malkin, smiling engagingly, with his hat still in his hand, and the sun glancing dazzlingly on his bald head. "At any hour that will best suit you, Lady Vernon, I shall be most happy to wait upon you."

"I shall be going home now; I have made my little round of visits."

"And left a great many afflicted hearts comforted," interpolated the appreciative doctor.

"And I mean to return by the path," she continued, not choosing to hear the doctor's little compliment. "Open that door, please," she said to the footman, who contrived with a struggle, without dropping the volumes he was charged with, to disengage a key from his pocket, and open a wicket in the park wall, which at this point runs only a few yards in the rear of the houses. "And, as you say, you were on your way to Roydon Hall, you may as well, if you don't mind, come by the path with me."

The doctor was only too happy.

The footman stood by the open door, which was only about a dozen steps away; and Lady Vernon stopped for a moment, and said to him:

"You must see old Grimwick, and tell him to send up to Mrs. Mordaunt at six o'clock this evening for the blankets that I said he should have."

"Yes, my lady."

So now she and Doctor Malkin were walking in the perfect quietude of a secluded path among the trees, and he began by saying:

"You will be glad to hear, Lady Vernon, that everything was satisfactory, and every particular is now arranged. I was detained a little longer than I expected, but I saw Mr. Damian. He read the copies of the papers, and said they are more than sufficient."

A silence followed. Lady Vernon was looking straight before her with an inflexible countenance. They walked on about twenty steps before either spoke.

"We had a visit from Mercy Creswell to-day," said Lady Vernon.

"Oh! Had you? But I don't think I quite recollect who Mercy Creswell is."

"She was once a servant here, and now she is in the employment of Mr. Damian."

"Oh! I understand; actually in his service at present?"

"Yes."

The doctor looked intelligently at Lady Vernon.

"I wished to see her. I knew she would have a good deal to tell me; and I had some ideas of making her particularly useful, which on seeing her, and ascertaining that she is clever, I have made up my mind to carry into effect."

"I have no doubt that anything resolved on by Lady Vernon will be most judicious and successful."

"It is five years since I saw Mr. Damian; how is he looking?" asked Lady Vernon.

"Very well. His hair has been white a long time. I think he stoops a little now; but in all other respects he is unchanged. His sight, his hearing, his mind are quite unimpaired. He is very active, too; everything, in short, you could wish. He is going for a few days, at the end of the week, to his place near Brighton. But it is a mere flying visit."

"I suppose you have had a conversation with Mr. Damian?"

"A very detailed and full one; a very satisfactory conversation, indeed. I explained every point of difficulty on which he required light, and he is quite clear as to his duty."

"And I as to mine," she said, abstractedly, looking with gloomy eyes on the grass; "I as to mine." She was walking, unconsciously, more slowly.

"You have had a great deal of anxiety and trouble, Doctor Malkin," she said, suddenly raising her eyes. "I think you have acted with great kindness, and tact, and energy, and secrecy."

"Certainly," he interposed; "religious

secrecy. I should consider myself dishonoured, had I not."

"I'm sure of that; I'm quite sure of that, Doctor Malkin; and I am very much obliged to you. You have done me a great kindness, and I hope yet to make you understand how very much I feel it. I have still, I'm afraid, a great deal of trouble to give you."

"I should be a very ungrateful man, Lady Vernon, if, in a case of this painful kind, I were to grudge any trouble that could contribute to make your mind more happy. I should perhaps say less anxious."

"I know very well how I can rely upon you, Doctor Malkin," said Lady Vernon, abstractedly. "It will be quite necessary that you should go on Sunday. We can't avoid it. I don't like travelling on Sundays, when it can be helped. But in this particular case it is unavoidable."

"Quite; of course you can command me. I am entirely at your disposal."

"And no one knows where you go?"

"That of course. I—I manage that very easily. I do all I can by rail, and take the train at an unlikely station."

"You know best," she said with a heavy sigh. "I wish it were all over. Doctor Malkin, it comforts me that I am so well supported by advice. I know I am right; yet I do not think I could endure the responsibility alone."

A little pink flush showed itself suddenly in Doctor Malkin's pale cheeks; he looked down.

"I have relied a good deal on Mr. Tintern," he said. "He has had a great deal of experience, and you know he is perfectly conversant with the mode of proceeding, and all responsibility rests ultimately, neither upon you nor upon any of those whom you have honoured with your more immediate confidence, but entirely with other people," said Doctor Malkin.

"If you don't mind, I should thank you to call on Sunday afternoon. I don't care to part with the papers until then. Will six o'clock suit you?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, I'm sure I ought to thank you very much, you have relieved my anxiety. Perhaps it is as well that we should part here. Good-bye, Doctor Malkin."

"Entirely," acquiesced Doctor Malkin. "I will call on Sunday, at the hour you name. Charming weather we have got, and what a delightful serenity pervades this place always," he added, raising one

hand gently, with a faint smile round, as if to imply that he need have no scruple in withdrawing his escort under conditions so assuring and delightful. "One thing only, I hope, perhaps, without being very impertinent, I may suggest."

Doctor Malkin hesitated here, and Lady Vernon answered easily:

"I should be happy to hear anything you may think it well to say."

"I was thinking, perhaps, that it might be desirable, Lady Vernon, not indeed to quiet any doubts; for I don't see that any can anywhere exist; but merely by way of technical authority—I was going to say, that some communication, either with Mr. Coke, or some other London lawyer of eminence, would be perhaps desirable."

"I don't mind telling you, Doctor Malkin, that I have already taken that step," said the lady. "You shall have the papers on Sunday, when you call, and for the present, I think I will say good-bye."

And so they parted.

CHAPTER LIV. MR. HOWARD'S GRAVESTONE.

LADY VERNON'S correspondence with Mr. Dawe was at this time carried on daily.

One of the old gentleman's letters intensified her alarms. It said:

"I thought for a time I had discovered a different object of the young gentleman's devotions—Miss Tintern, of the Grange. I did not open my conjectures to him, nor did he speak on the subject to me. I think I was mistaken, and I can't now tell how it is. There is some powerful attraction, unquestionably, in the neighbourhood of Roydon."

Lady Vernon's panic continued, therefore, unabated.

On Saturday by the late post a letter reached Roydon, addressed to Miss Vernon, which took Maud a good deal by surprise. It was from Lady Mardykes, and was to this effect.

The Forest, Warhampton, Friday.

MY DEAR MISS VERNON,—You will be surprised when you see that I write from the Forest. I was suddenly called here yesterday by a message from dear papa. I found him so much better, and so entirely out of danger, that I sent by telegraph to my aunt, at Carsbrook, to prevent my friends going away; and to beg of her to stay till Tuesday, where I am quite sure you will find her very happy to take charge of you when you arrive, as you promised, on Monday. Pray do not postpone your

coming, or make any change in our plans, unless Lady Vernon should think differently. Your cousin Maximilla Medwyn will arrive early on Monday, and you will find her quite an old inhabitant by the time you reach Carsbrook in the evening. I will write to Maximilla to-day and tell her not to put off coming, and that I have written to you to rely upon her being at Carsbrook early on Monday. Pray write to me here by return, when you have ascertained what Lady Vernon decides.

So the note ended.

Maud was dismayed. Was this one of those slips between the cup and the lip, by which the nectar of life is spilled and lost? With an augury of ill, she repaired with the note to Lady Vernon.

"What is this, Maud?" inquired Lady Vernon, as Maud held Lady Mardykes's letter towards her.

Maud told her, and asked her to read it, and waited in trepidation till she had done so.

"I see no reason why you should not go on Monday, just as if nothing had happened. That will do."

She nodded, and Maud, immensely relieved, went to her room, and wrote her note to Lady Mardykes accordingly.

"So now," thought she, "we have reached Saturday evening; and if nothing happens between this and Monday, I shall be at Carsbrook on Monday night."

So that day passed in hope, Sunday dawned, and the sweet bell in Roydon tower sent its tremulous notes in spreading ripples far over fields, and chimneys, and lordly trees.

In church, Maud observed that Ethel Tintern was looking far from well. She reproached herself for not having driven over to the Grange to see her.

This Sunday the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered in Roydon Church, and among those who knelt round the cushioned steps of the communion-table, was Lady Vernon. Miss Tintern and Mrs. Tintern also were there, and Maud Vernon, who, once a month, from the time of her confirmation, had, according to the rule of Roydon Hall, been a regular attendant.

Lady Vernon has risen pale and stately, and is again in the great Vernon pew, kneeling in solitary supplication, while the murmured words of the great commemoration are heard faintly along the aisle, and reverent footfalls pass slowly up and down.

And now it is ended; the church seems darkened as she rises. It is overcast by a thunder-cloud. By the side-door they step out. Lady Vernon's handsome face does not look as if the light of peace was upon it. In the livid shadow of the sky, the grass upon the graves is changed to the sable tint of the yew. The grey church-tower and hoary tombstones are darkened to the hue of lead.

Mr. Foljambe joins them; Mrs. and Miss Tintern are standing by Lady Vernon and Maud. Mrs. Tintern is talking rather eagerly to Lady Vernon, who seems just then to have troubled thoughts of her own to employ her. She is talking about a particular tombstone; Lady Vernon does not want to look at it, but does not care to decline, as Mrs. Tintern is bent on it; and Mr. Foljambe only too anxious to act as guide.

They walk round the buttress at the corner of the old church, and they find themselves before the tombstone of the late vicar, Mr. Howard. It stands perpendicularly; the inscription is cut deep in the stone; and there is no decoration about it but the clustering roses, which straggle wide and high, and are now shedding their honours on the green mound.

As they walked toward this point, very slowly, over the churchyard grass, Ethel Tintern seized the opportunity to say a word or two to Maud.

"You go to Carsbrook to-morrow, don't you?"

"Yes," said Maud, "and I have been blaming myself for not having been to the Grange to see you; but I really could not help it—twice the carriage was at the door, and twice mamma put it off."

"A great many things have happened since I saw you—I dare not try to tell you now," she said, scarcely above a whisper. "It would not do; if we were alone, of course——"

"Can you tell me, Ethel, whether the carriage is here?" said Mrs. Tintern, looking over her shoulder at her daughter.

"Oh, yes—I saw it—it is waiting at the church-porch."

And she continued to Maud, when her mother had resumed her talk with Lady Vernon and Mr. Foljambe:

"I have made up my mind, nearly, to take a decisive step. I daren't tell you; I daren't now, you understand why," she glanced at the group close before them; "but I think I will write to you at Carsbrook, if I do what I am thinking of, that

is, what I am urged to, under a pressure that is almost cruel; a terrible pressure. Hush!"

The last word and a look were evoked by her observing, for her eye was upon them although she spoke to Maud, that the three elder people of the party had suddenly slackened their pace, and came to a standstill by the vicar's grave.

They had gone to the other side. Mr. Foljambe was leading the discussion; he was advising, I believe, some change in the arrangements of the vicar's grave, which he had persuaded Mrs. Tintern to admire; and which I'm afraid he would not have troubled his head about, had he not fancied they would have been received with special favour by Lady Vernon.

Maud and Miss Tintern were standing at this side of the gentle mound that covered the good man's bones, and neither thinking of the conversation that was proceeding at the other side.

On a sudden, with a malignant look, Lady Vernon's cold, sweet voice recalled Maud, with the words,

"Don't tread upon that grave, dear."

Maud withdrew her foot quickly.

"No foot looks pretty on a grave," she continued with the same look, and a momentary shudder.

"I don't think my foot was actually upon the grave, though it looked so to you," Maud pleaded, a little disconcerted.

"Many people have a feeling about treading on a grave. I think it so horrible an indignity to mortality—I was going to say. I hope, Mr. Foljambe, that you, who are obliged, pretty often, to walk among them, feel that peculiar recoil; but I need hardly ask—you are so humane."

Uttered in cold, gentle tones, this was irritating to spirited Maud Vernon.

"But I do assure you, mamma," she said, with a heightened colour, "my foot was not upon it. I am quite certain."

"There, there, there, there, dear," said Lady Vernon, "I shan't mention it any more. Pray don't allow yourself to be excited, Maud; that kind of thing can't be good for any one."

Maud's fine eyes and beautiful colour were brighter. But Lady Vernon went on talking fluently, in very low tones, to old Mr. Foljambe, and she turned as they walked away, and said to Mrs. Tintern, gently, "I scarcely like to ask poor dear Maud to do or to omit anything. She becomes so miserably excited."

Maud, I dare say, had a word of com-

plaint to utter in Miss Tintern's car as they returned to take leave, and got into their carriages at the church-door.

In a dark and sour mood Lady Vernon bid old Mr. Foljambe good-bye.

"What bores people are! To think of those two stupid persons taking me there to hear all that odious nonsense."

Lady Vernon did not come to luncheon, and hardly eat anything at dinner. She was by no means well that Sunday evening.

Doctor Malkin came and departed, the sun set, and Maud was glad, as her maid dropped the extinguisher on her candle, that the day was over, and that she would sleep next night at Carsbrook.

AMATEURS AT MOPETOWN.

A YEAR is supposed to have elapsed, as they say in the play-bills of melodramas, since my last visit to "this favoured locality," as it is called in its own journal. Duty once more brought me to the Dolphin, where I found that the Mendelssohn Jacksons had long since cast the dust off their shoes, and fled the place. But the Rooms flourished and looked as bright and spick and span as ever.

As I passed they seemed to be "up" again; all the boards were out, reclining against the pillars in very *dégagé* fashion, with a sort of lazy, hand-in-pocket style. They were covered over with small bills, headed "Grand Amateur Theatricals," and the performance was for that very night. I at once secured a ticket.

The landlord of the Dolphin was quite excited, and scarcely able to attend upon me.

"He had two of the gentlemen up-stairs, Mr. Killick and Captain Tooley. The town was full of the others who had come in; more were arriving that night. It was for a fine charity," continued the host of the Dolphin; "the rearin' of an Alexandra wing, I'm told."

I repeated the words after him in wonder. What odd objects they had in Mopetown! On referring to the bill I saw that the acting was for the erection of "an Alexandra wing" to a consumptive hospital in the neighbourhood, though what description of "wing" that was I was at a loss to discover. At all events it did not much matter, as I had reasonable suspicion that anything connected with Mopetown Rooms was not likely to bring in much funds, no matter how benevolent the pur-

pose. But it seems that there was a dramatic detachment of a foot regiment quartered a few miles off, which counted in its ranks the Killick and Tooley before mentioned, with "Little Dodd," as he was called, and, above all, the Honourable Mrs. Badminton, the colonel's wife. She, indeed, was with the head-quarters of the regiment at Manchester, but she had been engaged, or had engaged herself, "special."

It came about, I understood, in this way: Little Dodd, passing the Rooms one morning, had "voted"—a favourite and polite fiction for carrying any plan of his own into prompt execution—for going in. His exclamation was, "By Jove! we might get up a play here, and astonish the rustics!" The scheme at that moment "sprang armed" and complete from his little head. "We'd get down Timmons, with a portable stage and dresses, and 'beat up' some of the acting girls in the neighbourhood." As for audience, they'd make the rustics come, and "stick them for seven-and-six apiece for stalls." A brother in arms objected that Mopetown was such a hungry place, that the rustics would find it hard to club the amount for a single stall; but Little Dodd put this aside contemptuously, saying, "they'd make 'em come, and deuced glad they ought to be to be allowed to pay."

In a few days Little Dodd had fixed the plays—*Miriam's Crime*, I believe, which he would carry through by playing his "great part," and *Poor Pillicoddy*, in which he would do the same, by playing his other great part; and he would make this carrying through doubly sure by singing Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines, between both. But these arrangements, it seems, were rudely set aside by an untoward fatality. Some "stupid ass" wrote to the Honourable Mrs. Badminton, the colonel's lady, that they were getting up plays, such fun, &c., and she had written back most graciously that "she would help them, and come specially." This was a *ukase*, as it were, against which there was no appealing.

The Honourable Mrs. Badminton, in her youth, had been a perfect stroller, acting here, there, and everywhere. There was scarcely an officer in Her Majesty's army who had not acted with Lord Mountfogie's daughter. There were few small provincial theatres in which she had not appeared. It was in this way that she had won the heart of the gallant Badminton, then a simple lieutenant of foot. Her Betsy Baker was familiar; some, indeed,

said they knew it by heart, and certain of the irreverent were in the habit of calling her "Bet." Her daughters were now nearly grown up, but in the kindest and most good-natured way she was always glad to give her talents for charity.

Little Dodd's face was amusing for its blankness and disgust.

"Did you ever hear such a thing? Here's Bet coming down on us. Better give it all up. She'll take the whole fat, and we'll have her eternal Betsy Baker."

The little man seemed to forget that he had proposed securing all the "fat" for himself; but as for giving up the plan, he well knew that that was not to be thought of. For she commanded the regiment, would stop his leave, order him guards, of course "inspiring" her colonel, and annoy him in other ways.

In a few days she arrived, billeted herself on a visit to a good-natured acquaintance, Mrs. Towler, and took the whole arrangements on herself. Every one knew Pillicoddy by heart. *Miriam's Crime* was much too heavy. No, far better have a "powder and puff" piece, where they would be all at home, and have little to do. She had brought one down, "And as I hear," added the lady, modestly, "they are all dying to see me in Betsy; and as I have it at my fingers' ends, I think it would be the safest thing, you know. Better settle at once, and lose no time."

This was equivalent to a command. Tooley and Killick were toadies, and concurred heartily, as Little Dodd had to do, with a rueful face.

"You can sing one of those queer buffoonery songs if you like," she said, half contemptuously, "though I always think they are out of place."

"I knew it," said Little Dodd, later. "Didn't I tell you she'd force her Betsy on us, and her 'powder and puff' piece? You'll see she has all the fat in that too—some pert waiting-maid in a hoop, who lets fellows in wigs in at the garden-gate. I know the style of thing well."

Here Little Dodd showed surprising instinct and sagacity, unless, indeed, we explain it on the vulgar principle of "setting a thief," &c. Friends might have made the same remark about him, and have guessed, beforehand, that in any pieces he chose would have been found, to a certainty, pert cockneys in pink trousers and blue coats, or free-and-easy servants.

Precisely as he had anticipated, the

Honourable Mrs. Badminton produced a manuscript piece, which, she announced, Mr. St. Lucy, a clever friend of hers, who wrote for the magazines—and there are many clever people who do this, which differs a little from writing *in* the magazines—had adapted from the French for her. It was entitled, *A Midnight Mistake*; or, *Trianon Revels*. And that title figured bravely on the board at the door of the Rooms.

Much of the above information I gleaned from stray conversations with Mr. Dodd himself, who was quite willing to enter on the subject of his treatment with any stranger.

"The thing will be a dead failure. I suppose there aren't a dozen places taken; all the rest given away; the hall packed with her friends. I said so from the beginning. Who'd pay to see her?"

The inference was that crowds would pay to see him.

"But," said I, "the cost of the affair; the hired stage, dresses, &c."

"Lord bless you," he said. "Did you think we'd do that *now*? I suppose it would be a matter of fifty pounds out of our pockets. No, hang it! I stuck out against that; so did poor Mrs. Towler. The carpenter has knocked the thing up, and the house-painter fellow here has done a couple of scenes. But she stuck us for two guineas apiece for the hire of dresses for her infernal *Midnight Mistake*."

"Then the *Alexandra wing*?" I said.

"*Alexandra humbug*!" he said. "The thing won't give them the price of a single stone. But, bless you, the hospital people didn't want an *Alexandra* or any wing at all. They wouldn't keep it if they got it. They haven't means to keep up what they have. That was all her dodge. She is always playing for *Alexandra wings*, and never brought a sixpence to one of them. I never saw one anywhere, nor did any one else I believe."

At night I repaired to the Rooms. They were very full indeed, though the audience was rather of a mixed character. A stage and curtain had been run up at the end. A piano was in front, by way of orchestra, and the stalls were tolerably full. I noticed, however, the extraordinary number of soldiers present, attended by their wives and female friends. The stalls seemed to me to be almost entirely filled with ladies of a regimental aspect—wives, sisters, cousins, &c., of the officers, though I could distinguish the clergyman, the local soli-

citor, ditto surgeon, the head of the post-office, and a few more notabilities.

Mr. Behman, R.A.M., who had succeeded the Mendelssohn Jackson family, and who, I believe, was on the eve of retiring like the same family, was at the instrument, playing the company in with a valse. The great ones, the distinguished party who were to drive in from Towler, had twelve places reserved for them. They had not arrived yet. Presently, however, they appeared—a procession of opera cloaks winding up the aisle to their places, the stewards ushering them. They took their seats, and then the bills were distributed. I give the document at length, as it is characteristic:

THEATRE ROYAL, MOPETOWN.

In aid of the erection of an

ALEXANDRA WING FOR THE INFIRMARY.

This Evening, the Performances will commence with a Prologue, written for the occasion, by

THE HONOURABLE MRS. BADMINTON.

After which will be presented a New Piece, expressly written for, and dedicated to, the Hon. Mrs. Badminton,

ENTITLED,

A MIDNIGHT MISTAKE;

OR,

TRIANON REVELS,

BY HORACE ST. LUCY, ESQ.

Louis XV., Mr. Sparks, —th Regt.

Comte de Buzenval, Captain Tooley, —th Regt.

Jules de Nerval (a Gascon gentleman) Mr. Killick, —th Regt.

Bontemps (Captain of the Guard), Mr. Lily, —th Regt.

Le Coq (an innkeeper), Mr. Dodd, —th Regt.

Marquise de Beaure, Mrs. McCullum,

and

Rigolette (a waiting-maid), the Hon. Mrs. Badminton. Courtiers, nobles, &c.

SCENE.—*The Trianon Gardens.*

TIME, 1770.

After which a Comic Song,

CAPTAIN JINKS OF THE HORSE MARINES,

BY MR. DODD, —TH REGIMENT

(In character).

The whole to conclude with (by desire)

BETSY BAKER.

Betsy Baker (her original character) the Honourable Mrs. Badminton.

A bell was heard to ring behind, the curtain was drawn aside, and Mr. Killick, a very tall young man, in a powdered wig and sky-blue coat, his lower limbs looking very cool in silk stockings and shoes, came out to speak the prologue. He began very hurriedly:

"Kind friends, we greet you once again,
Let not—our—mitine—stage—be raised—in vain,
Of every cause from east—unto the west,
Sure that of charity's the best.
And when—and when——"

Here he stopped and looked round at the

curtain behind him. We heard a voice murmuring something, but Mr. Killick could not hear. "And when——" he began, stopped again, and gave a smile. We all applauded.

"And when——"

He at last caught the word—

"your race of life is o'er,
You'll bless the charity that's gone before."

Here he paused again, bewildered, bit his glove, smiled again, and finally went on:

"To-night, our histrionic host,
Brought from pillar and from post,
A hundred miles——"

"A hundred miles," repeated Mr. Killick, anxiously, then said, with relief, "Oh, yes," at which we laughed:

"A hundred miles has journey'd one,
You'll guess I mean fair BADMINTON!"

Tremendous applause from the soldiers and their wives, Mr. Killick smiling, and evidently racking his brain for the next line, which we heard given in a hoarse voice behind the curtain: "'Tis yours to give the draymar laws"—

"'Tis yours to give the drama laws,
And all we ask is *your* applause."

On which Mr. Killick—a broad grin on his features—retired hastily, bowing and nodding. Then the bell rang, and the curtain rose. I have seen Mr. St. Lucy's play, and so has the reader, a good many times—that is to say, a piece where M. le Marquis, and Jules, a lover, a monarch of objectionable tastes, and a lovely girl out of a convent, are all mixed up in some vague transaction. I will not, therefore, enter into Mr. St. Lucy's plot more than by saying that a fête was being given at the Trianon, where the marquise repaired masked, and where the king came masked with De Buzenval, and where "Jool," the Gascon gentleman, came also masked. There was a duel at one time of the night, and at the end a strong body of privates of the regiment came in, holding lights—they were the courtiers, nobles, &c.—and all was cleared up. Mr. Killick, as the Gascon gentleman, must own, quite eclipsed Little Dodd as the comic character. He was always forgetting his part, and then standing with a good-humoured smile till he caught the prompter's words, making us all laugh prodigiously; but when he declared his passion to the marquise, we roared again. "Marie," he said, "you should not treat me so! You know me. From a boy I have thought of you, and of you alone; and I shall die if you still refuse to be mine." This was

so pleasantly said, that we were delighted. "For nights past I have watered my pillow with tears. I cannot sleep; my dreams are disturbed with weary visions; and, oh, Mary!" added Mr. Killick, dropping on one knee, "I love you, and shall not rise till you return my passion." Mr. Killick, looking the picture of health and good-humour as he remained on his knees, we all laughed heartily; and I could hear the sergeants' wives behind me: "Ain't Mr. Killick funny?"

But the real phenomenon of the piece was how a simple waiting-maid, such as the Honourable Mrs. Badminton was, could have so much to do. She was everywhere. She was not off the stage a moment. She talked all through, and directed everybody, even the king. She told the count what to do, and she told the lovers what to do. A woman wrapped in a cloak and hood overheard the king's nefarious designs; the hood was presently lifted, and we recognised the Honourable Mrs. Badminton. Some one was concealed in a closet, as the wicked De Buzenval was maturing designs of his own on the lovely marquise, and it turned out to be the Honourable Mrs. Badminton. She was behind trees and bushes. She was entirely in the interest of the lovers, and had a very difficult task to carry out. But, at the same time, I must say she had ample opportunity and every facility given to her. One or two inferior parts, I should mention, were played by selected privates, who, justice compels me to say, though their names were not set down in the bill, played with great steadiness and respectability. I could have wished, however, that one had not persisted in addressing his august master as "Buzzingvell," but no one remarked it.

Little Dodd was quite overpowered—as indeed he might be—in such "rot," as he would disrespectfully term Mr. St. Lucy's work. But when he came to Captain Jinks he had his turn. Even his appearance, in enormous weeping whiskers of a brick red, an immense grotesque helmet, jack-boots, and clanking sword, made the sergeants' wives laugh so, he could not begin.

"Ain't Mr. Dodd funny, Jemima? That's Mr. Dodd. Lord, how he do look!"

Between every verse he clanked and strode up and down, and, I must say, as in the case of most comic singers, such pantomime was more diverting than the singing. He was rapturously encored, and substituted the Ratcatcher's Daughter, which met with the same reception.

The farce followed. There again it was all Badminton. It seemed to go home to the sergeants' wives, delighted to see a genuine 'ousemaid with her broom, and who told each other over and over again, with many a "Lawks, Mary! that there was Mrs. Badminton, and weren't she funny!" But somehow it appeared to me that the enjoyment was not nearly so racy at Mr. Dodd's song as at the good-humoured Killick: it appeared to be enforced. The Honourable Mrs. Badminton had a colonel-like fashion even in her acting, and said her comic speeches with an air as who should say, "Applaud that." As for her aplomb and composure, it assured one as to the truth of the statement, that she commanded the regiment. Once an impertinent interruption took place in the gallery between a soldier and a native, whose place had been taken, when the Honourable Mrs. Badminton came forward and fixed her eyes in a severe manner on the disturbers. The soldier quailed, and at once gave up the argument. The native, not so accustomed to her influence, renewed the discussion, when the Honourable Mrs. Badminton, who was entering on an arch and funny speech, stopped, and said sharply:

"If these interruptions go on, I shall withdraw from the piece."

A deathlike stillness followed.

I believe it was considered to be one of the most successful performances ever known in the amateur way. Nothing could have "gone off" better—the current phrase. Little Dodd was but half content: he was disgusted, he said, with the whole thing.

It was a revolting exhibition of vanity, wasn't it—he left it to any one—that woman grabbing at everything? He saw all the people gaping and yawning, the parson and all, and he thought he never could get out of it fast enough, and wished he had his seven-and-six back. The Honourable Mrs. Badminton, however, I heard was much pleased, and paid us the compliment of saying we were a very intelligent audience.

As regards the Alexandra wing, the heavy expenses incurred did not admit of anything being handed over to the funds of the institution. There was posting, scenery, advertisements in local papers, and some suppers at the Dolphin for the actors, both before as well as after their work. Thus the "wing" received nothing. But after all, if there was truth in the view

taken by Little Dodd, the institution could not complain, as there was no intention to erect such a structure.

SCIENCE FOR THE UNSCIENTIFIC.

THERE are individuals who never take their walks abroad without a pocket-knife, a few coppers, and a bit of string. Neglecting the two first articles as foreign to our purpose, what a helpful little thing is a bit of string, both at home and abroad, to look no further than its use as a collector and a conservator. In a country walk it keeps together, in order, flowers with flowers, ferns with ferns, grapes with grapes, and sticks with sticks; in-doors, it unites the bills of the year, the journals of a class, newspaper cuttings on some favourite subject, and trash for the rubbish-heap, or for lighting fires. If, in certain offices, string is abused in the shape of red tape, what would be the state of those offices if deprived of red tape's versatile aid?

What the twine-spinner does for the odds and ends of every-day life, the bookbinder, and, above all, the reprinter and republisher does for literary miscellanies, which may have a connecting link of authorship or subject, of date or occasion, but which may be materially as heterogeneous as printed papers can be. Quartos, duodecimos, loose pamphlet-shaped tracts, stitched in covers, or uncovered and unstitched, single leaves begging the bill-sticker to give them a local habitation, defy the powers of string to convert them into a sightly and legible whole. It is then that the republisher comes in, giving unity, consistency, and order to what might otherwise have been consigned to the hopeless limbo of literature.

Doubtless multitudes of small publications deserve to meet with no better doom than a speedy consignment to that dusty fate; there are others which we pick up along the road of life, and thrust with delight into our travelling wallet, as we would soft-shining pearls discovered on a lonely shore. Few flying words are better worth collecting than those which Professor Tyndall lets fall from time to time; and the public is to be congratulated that, in obedience to an impulse from America, he has been induced to gather together the series of detached essays, lectures, and reviews which have recently come forth as *Fragments of Science for Unscientific People*.

For unscientific people, yes; for ignorant people, no; for prejudiced, bigoted, one-sided people, still less. The *Fragments* are not all of them easy reading. You cannot run through them as you run through a lady-writer's romance, although certain portions of them are more sensational than the most sensational novel. There is never an attempt to hide rough ground under the flowers of rhetoric or the sticks and straws of verbiage. Wherever there are hard places to be traversed, Professor Tyndall tells you they are and will be hard, and advises you to gird up your loins accordingly. When the trying bit of climbing is accomplished, he says, like a man, "Thus patiently you have accompanied me over a piece of exceedingly difficult ground; and I think as a prudent guide, we ought to halt upon the eminence we have now attained. We might go higher, but the boulders begin here to be very rough. At a future day we shall, I doubt not, be able to overcome this difficulty, and to reach together a greater elevation."

Such frankness, combined with such lucidity, renders the reading of Professor Tyndall's works a mental tonic. They often require the effort which it takes to plunge bodily into a chilly pool, but the resulting reaction of conscious energy and delight more than compensates for the effort. The professor's mind is doubly clear; clear to itself and clear to others. Obscured by no mists, it puts forth no humbug. It has never been the writer's privilege to hear this gifted lecturer's viva voce discourse, but certain he is that he would never do what he relates that Faraday did upon occasion. Faraday did not confine himself to experimental discovery. He aspired to be a teacher, and reflected and wrote upon the method of scientific exposition. "A lecturer," he observes, "should appear easy and collected, undaunted and unconcerned:" still, "his whole behaviour should evince respect for his audience." These recommendations were afterwards in great part embodied by himself. Doctor Tyndall doubts his unconcern, but his fearlessness was often manifested. It used to rise within him as a wave, which carried both him and his audience along with it. On rare occasions also, when he felt himself and his subject hopelessly unintelligible, he suddenly evoked a certain recklessness of thought, and without halting to extricate his bewildered followers, he would dash alone

through the jungle into which he had unwittingly led them; thus saving them from ennui by the exhibition of a vigour which, for the time being, they could neither share nor comprehend.

Now Professor Tyndall, we believe, would never do anything of the kind. In the first place, he would take good care never to lead his hearers into a jungle unwittingly; and in the second place, if he had strayed with them into one, he would make it a point of honour to pilot them out of it. So long as an uncouth difficulty is malleable, he never tires till he has hammered it into shape; if it is utterly refractory, he tells you it is so, and lets it alone.

"Let us get a clear idea of this," or words to the same purport, is his constant and urgent appeal to his hearers when about to attack some knotty point. "My wish to render our mental images complete, causes me to dwell briefly upon these known points, and the same wish will cause me to linger a little longer among others." "My aim throughout has been to raise in your minds distinct physical images of the various processes involved in our researches." He struggles heroically to be clear, and the endeavour results in his being clear. Witness his explanation of the chemical action of certain rays of light, and the way in which he obstinately persists in not allowing the leading principle of the undulatory theory of light to be forgotten.

"Here I would ask you to make familiar to your minds the idea that no chemical action can be produced by a ray, that does not involve the destruction of the ray. But the term 'ray' is unsatisfactory to us at present, when our desire is to abolish all vagueness, and to fix a definite physical significance to each of our terms. Abandoning the term 'ray' as loose and indefinite, we have to fix our thoughts upon the waves of light, and to render clear to our minds that those waves, which produce chemical action, do so by delivering up their own motion to the molecules which they decompose."

Or let us take polarised light as an example. Most educated persons have heard of polarised light; they certainly see it every day, as their attendants talk prose, without knowing it. They may perhaps have seen its brilliant effects displayed in the microscope of some ingenious neighbour. But ask them in what respect polarised differs from unpolarised light, and they will be hard put to give an answer. The present writer has seen no answer to the question

to be compared, in respect to clearness and capability of popular comprehension, with Professor Tyndall's explanation. "There is another subject connected with our firmament, of a more subtle and recondite character than even its colour. I mean what Herschel calls that 'mysterious and beautiful phenomenon,' the polarisation of the light of the sky. The polarity of a magnet consists in its two-endedness, both ends, or poles, acting in opposite ways. Polar forces, as most of you know, are those in which the duality of attraction and repulsion is manifested. And a kind of two-sidedness, noticed by Huygens, commented on by Newton, and discovered by a French philosopher, named Malus, in a beam of light which had been reflected from one of the windows of the Luxembourg Palace in Paris, receives the name of polarisation." In short, a beam of polarised light has two sides, which differ from each other in their nature, qualities, and effects. If the beam is flat and broad; like the blade of a knife, one side is sharp and thin, as it were, the other flat and blunt; if the beam were cylindrical like a walking-stick, or square like a draper's measure, one-half of it might consist of wood, the other of barley-sugar. The opposite sides of a polarised beam of light differ quite as much as that.

This clearness is a natural consequence of Professor Tyndall's writings being eminently truthful. It may be too much to assert that every muddle-headed or muddle-tongued person is untruthful, but certain it is that all uncandid, insincere persons, all rogues, swindlers, and intriguers, are obscure, involved, contradictory, and often unintelligible in their sayings. "Speech was given to man to hide his thoughts," said one of the artfullest of men. Professor Tyndall is too good a philosopher, and too kind-hearted, to hit any fellow-philosopher hardly; but is there no well-known contemporary writer open to some such a remark as this? "A favourite theory—the desire to establish or avoid a certain result—can so warp the mind as to destroy its power of estimating facts. I have known men to work for years under a fascination of this kind, unable to extricate themselves from its fatal influence. They had certain data, but not, as it happened, enough. They supplemented the data, and went wrong. From that hour their intellects were so blinded to the perception of adverse phenomena, that they never reached truth."

What Professor Tyndall knows, he does know, and says that he knows it, and why.

What he does not know he has the courage to state that he does not—adding, perhaps, that he is not ever likely to know. "Of the inner quality that enables matter to attract matter, we know nothing." While he feels a natural pride in scientific achievement—while he regards science as the most powerful instrument of intellectual culture as well as the most powerful ministrant to the material wants of men—if you ask him whether science has solved, or is likely in our day to solve, the problem of this universe, he is obliged to shake his head in doubt. As far as he can see, there is no quality in the human intellect which is fit to be applied to the solution of the problem. It is entirely beyond us. He compares the mind of man to a musical instrument with a certain range of notes, beyond which, in both directions, we have an infinitude of silence. The phenomena of matter and force lie within our intellectual range; but behind, and above, and around all, the real mystery of this universe lies unsolved, and, as far as we are concerned, is incapable of solution.

Doctor Tyndall once walked down Regent-street with a man of great gifts and acquirements, discussing with him various theological questions. He could not accept his views of the origin and destiny of the universe, nor was he prepared to enunciate any views of his own. His friend turned to him at length and said, "You surely must have a theory of the universe." That he should in one way or another have solved this mystery of mysteries, seemed to the speaker a matter of course. "I have not even a theory of magnetism," was the modest reply.

The human brain is said to be the instrument of thought and feeling; when we are hurt, the brain feels it; when we ponder, it is the brain that thinks; when our passions or affections are excited, it is through the instrumentality of the brain. But at this point Professor Tyndall very properly asks for a little more precision. How does consciousness infuse itself into the problem? Granted that a definite thought, and a definite molecular action in the brain, occur simultaneously, we should be as far as ever from the solution of the problem, "How are these physical processes connected with the facts of consciousness?" The chasm between the two classes of phenomena would still remain intellectually impassable. Let the consciousness of love, for example, be associated with a right-handed spiral motion of the molecules of the brain, and the consciousness of hate with

a left-handed spiral motion. We should then know, when we love, that their motion is in one direction, and, when we hate, that their motion is in the other direction; but the "WHY?" would remain as unanswerable as before.

The problem of the connexion of body and soul is as insoluble in its modern form as it was in the pre-scientific ages. Phosphorus is known to enter into the composition of the human brain, and a trenchant German writer has exclaimed: "Ohne Phosphor, kein Gedanke"—"No thought, without phosphorus." That may or may not be the case; but even if we knew it to be the case, the knowledge would not lighten our darkness. On both sides of the zone here assigned to the materialist, he is equally helpless. If you ask him whence is "matter?" who or what divided it into molecules? who or what impressed upon them the necessity of running into organic forms? he has no answer. Science is mute in reply to these questions.

We travel with confidence under such a guide, and do not hesitate to inspect with him the objects that happen to lie in our path. Dust, oh! If you step aside at the cry, still remain near enough to take a peep at it. For what is dust? As sand is a highly elaborate preparation of sundry rocks and other hard portions of the terrestrial crust, dust is a still more elaborate form, both of organic and inorganic matter. Dust is, partly, what we have been, bodily speaking, and what we shall be. Ashes, we return to ashes; dust, we return to dust. Dust comprises carbonate of lime, magnesia, iron, carbon, organisable matter, which may become first a grain of wheat or a cabbage, and then a fractional part of a man. In the shape of dust which is blown about the streets, we may inhale our ancestors, and be inhaled by our posterity. Great Cæsar, dead and turned to clay, is just as likely to form a dust-cloud on a summer's as to stop a hole on a winter's day. Dust is despised only by the ignorant; but whoever has possessed a microscope of even moderate pretensions, will take an interest in, and feel a respect for, dust. Dust, independently of its intrinsic nature, derives value from its mere mechanical qualities. "A bushel of March dust is worth a king's ransom." What would become of the farmer and the gardener, and what, consequently, would become of all civilised peoples, if dust were not, except liquefied as mud or solidified as rock?

Of the curiosities and marvels of dust we learn not a little from Doctor Tyndall's *Fragments*, which may be looked upon themselves as a sort of scientific dust, although the grains are of quite appreciable magnitude and importance.

Dust is such a thorough Paul Pry, so intrusive, so all-pervading, that there is some foundation for Night Thought Young's hypothesis of a universe of dust, except that each particular atom does not dance, as he imagined, according to its own devices, but according to law. The air on the top of Mont Blanc contains dust; but the acme and concentration of dirt is the atmosphere of London, enveloped by which it is impossible for anybody to be quite clean, outside or in. Solar light, in passing through a dark room, reveals its track by illuminating the dust floating in the air; if there were no dust, no track would be visible. Professor Tyndall, who has a keen eye for the beautiful, says that, on a day of transient shadows, there was something almost magical in the rise and dissolution of the luminous beams among the scaffolding poles of the Royal Albert Hall.

To carry out his researches on the decomposition of vapours by light, he was compelled to remove all dust from his experimental tubes. It was no easy matter to do so. At last, prior to admitting the air, he carefully caused it to pass over a spirit-lamp flame. The floating particles no longer appeared, having been burnt up by the flame. Those particles were, therefore, of organic origin. He was by no means prepared for this result; for he had thought that the dust of our air was, in great part, inorganic and non-combustible. The organic origin of a great portion of our floating and suspended dust is of vast importance, in more ways than one. It is productive both of good and evil. Oxyhydrogen flame, scarcely visible in the air of a room, would be still less so if it could be burnt in an absolutely clean atmosphere. Such flames are made luminous by the dust in the air. In very dusty climates, there can be no doubt that the particles so diffused act as a manure in the course of time, and likewise supply, in the crannies and on the ledges of rocks, a scanty soil which furnishes the means of a commencement of vegetation.

Dust is the cause of the lovely colour of the azure firmament. In fact, sky-blue may be produced by exceedingly minute particles of any kind of matter. To the same cause are to be ascribed the effects by

which distance lends enchantment to the view. Professor Tyndall makes an artificial sky more perfect than the real one. In mountainous countries, hills at no great distance are rendered almost invisible by haze. It will be understood that it is not the interposition of the haze as an opaque body that renders the mountains indistinct, but that it is the light of the haze which dims and bewilders the eye, and thus weakens the definition of the objects seen through it. Artists take notice of these phenomena under the name of aerial perspective. The haze varies with the temperature and humidity of the atmosphere. At certain times and places it is almost as blue as the sky itself, but to see its colour the attention must be withdrawn from the mountains and from the trees which cover them. In point of fact, the haze is a piece of more or less perfect sky; it is produced in the same manner, and is subject to the same laws, as the firmament itself. We live in the sky, not under it.

Dust acquires a fearful interest, when we regard it as an agent in spreading disease. Professor Tyndall believes there are the strongest grounds for holding contagious matter to be "particulate," and, further, that the particles are, to all intents and purposes, germs, exhibiting, as they do, the fundamental characters of propagating their own kind through countless generations, and over vast geographical areas. Their life and reproduction run parallel to, and are an incident of, the life of man himself. He does not doubt the ability of these particles to scatter light, nor that the means by which the visible floating dust of our air is arrested will also be found effectual in arresting contagion. Doctor William Budd states: "As to the germ theory itself, that is a matter on which I have long since made up my mind. From the day when I first began to think upon these subjects I have never had a doubt that the specific cause of contagious fevers must be living organisms"—dust alive.

ROME. 1870.

WRITTEN ON THE EVE OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE
ITALIAN TROOPS INTO ROME.

THERE is a picture I remember well,
A fresco, fading in my Southern home,
A woman sleeping on the burning sand,
While baleful sunset vapours fill the land,
A type of thee, O Rome!

The slant sun searches for her cheek, and warms
Its golden brown to amber, till the bee,
Confused by sweetness, sucks it as a flower.
No queen, who dreams within her palace bower,
Is throned more royally.

Above the blue, far-off, mysterious sky,
O'er-canopies her grave majestic head,
And presses her shut eyes, so sadly sweet;
The swart Campagna stretches round her feet,
As 'twere a carpet spread.

Around (bold headlands in that tideless sea)
Surge awful ruins, prone, august, and hoar,
Void temples, broken columns, arches vast,
Where oracles and echoes of the past
Reverberate evermore!

An empty wallet lies beside her hand,
A cross defaced hangs on her scarlet vest;
Forlorn and poor, she sleeps abandoned there,
Her face, o'ershadowed by a grand despair,
Is hushed in mournful rest.

Unconscious of all peril, calm, she sleeps,
Though soon the treach'rous fatal dews will rise
Which lead from sleep to death; soft cobweb folds
Thus bind a captured fly in spider holds,
Where, crushed, it slowly dies.

The poison murders with a bland caress,
A sugar'd venom 'neath which life expires;
But wake her and she's saved. Is there no name
Will rouse her from this sleep, as sudden flame
Is held to smouldering fires?

Alas, alas! to me that picture seems
My country's symbol. Rome, thus fair art thou.
Dead vampyre lips thus fasten on thy breath,
And beauty deepening into solemn death,
Thus crowns thy faded brow.

She sleeps 'mid ruins, as thou sleepest, Rome!
Beneath as subtle, deadly a control;
A worse malaria encravates thy will,
And fate and falsehood both unite to kill,
To soil and crush thy soul.

But thou art saved; loud o'er thy purple hills
The silence breaks, thy brave deliverers come;
Clear as a clarion's note the music falls,
And nations greet the kingly voice which calls,
Arise, be free, O Rome!

A CROW-BOY'S MIND.

It is not easy in any country, and especially in England, where caste, though theoretically non-existing, is a practical fact, for the different classes of society to understand each other intimately. And not only class, but sex and age form a barrier that it is difficult to overpass. Women continually complain that men do not understand them, and men bring the same accusation against women. The rich, although they may sympathise with, and be kind and charitable to the poor, do not know the right method of getting into their confidence, and very seldom take possession of their sympathies; and the poor, in like manner, have idiosyncrasies which prevent them from thinking with the thoughts of the rich, or as thoroughly confiding in them as they would in people in their own rank of life. The workman walks in a different mental atmosphere from that which surrounds his employer; and the employer, however willing to cultivate friendly feelings, is seldom able to establish intimate

relations between himself and the people to whom he pays wages. What does my lord know of his gamekeeper, or the gamekeeper of my lord? What does Dives know about Lazarus, or Lazarus about Dives? What does the wise man know of the fool, and vice versa? Or the honest man—prosperous in fine linen and broad-cloth—of the shabby thief who steals his pocket-handkerchief, or of the more dashing rascal, who breaks into houses—or forges notes? Nothing. There is a shadowy, impalpable, invisible, but real and unmistakable, veil between them, which, though it does not hide each from the other, distorts the vision like a false medium. We neither see ourselves as others see us, nor do we see others as they really exist.

It was once my fancy to try and get into the mind and thought of a crow-boy, aged about fifteen, and a very difficult task I found it. I am not sure that I succeeded, and that my labour was not thrown away. The difficulties that beset the attempt were the disparity of age and of social condition. I endeavoured to take off the armour of caste, and approach him as fellow-creature to fellow-creature; but though I carefully, as I thought, divested myself of my coat of mail, he was long before he took off his, possibly because he did not know that he wore any. I first established a talking acquaintance with him, in my daily walks across the fields where he was stationed, to a favourite piece of woodland scenery, which I haunted for its beauty. Our discourse was of the weather and of the crows, and often of his appetite and his dinner, if I came across him at noon, when it was his custom to sit upon a stile if the weather were cloudy, and under a tree if it were warm and sunny, cutting his hunch of bread and bacon with a single-bladed pocket-knife. Sometimes I endeavoured to draw him into conversation about a little boat, which, when not engaged with the more important business of his dinner, or in throwing stones and shouting at the crows, he amused himself by scooping out of a clump of wood. For a long time, however, my success was but indifferent. He was by no means stupid, nor unusually shy, had a frank, open face, and such a development of brain, as, with proper education, might have fitted him for playing any part in the world, with fully the average credit, if not with more. But the armour of caste was upon him, as he seemed to have no more confidence in me than the crows had in him; and, though he answered

my questions in the friendliest spirit, there was something in his manner which implied that there would be little use in my talking to him or his talking to me, that in short there could be no companionship of thought between two persons so differently placed. But I was not discouraged by a reticence, which was instinctive rather than wilful, and I endeavoured as well as I could to warm him into confidence. If he had been only seven or eight years old, I should have tried the effect of a fairy tale, which I have always found to be an infallible recipe for opening the hearts of very little people of both sexes, but he was in the third year of his teens, and, worse than all, had indulged in the masculine vice of smoking, and was consequently too much of a little man in his own estimation to believe in dragons, ogres, and fairies, though possibly he believed in ghosts and witches.

I ascertained that he could not read without great difficulty. Consequently it was of no use to bribe him with Robinson Crusoe; or a history of adventure with lions, tigers, pirates, or robbers; or tales of travel and shipwreck, which tolerably educated boys are so fond of reading. How was I to show him that I was his friend? A gift of money might help; but it involved the danger of demoralisation, which I was anxious not to incur. At last an idea struck me. Coming upon him one sunny forenoon, as he sat on a bank busily scooping away at his little boat with his unusually blunt knife, I told him that I had something for him in my pocket.

"Sixpence?" inquired he.

"No—something better."

"A shilling?"

"No, not money—something better still."

Thus speaking, I drew from my pocket a knife with two big blades of different sizes, two small blades, a corkscrew, a gimlet, and a saw. The sight of this sevenfold treasure drew from him the sharp and joyous exclamation, "Oh, my!" while his eyes sparkled to twice their usual brightness and bigness.

"Oh, my! and is it for me?"

"Yes, for you! I bought it in London on purpose to give it you; but they say it's unlucky to make presents of knives or scissors because they cut friendship. Will you buy it for a penny?"

"I ain't got a penny," said he; "but I shall have one on Saturday."

"Well, I shall trust you till then. Meanwhile you can have the knife."

He took it from my hand, opened each blade successively, and looked for a few minutes with a satisfaction that was really unspeakable at every little apparatus; then shut them one after the other; then opened them again; then shut them up; and, finally, catching sight of a flock of crows, broke into a shout, less intended for scaring away the birds than as an expression of glee at his new acquisition.

Wordsworth says of the sonnet "that with that key Shakespeare unlocked his heart." I thought to myself that with that many-bladed knife I had fairly opened my way into that crow-boy's confidence. And so it turned out. Little more passed between us that day, and I left him alone with his treasure. From that time forth he seemed to have no secrets from me, and talked unreservedly, as to a person of his own age, unless when I prompted him with questions, and led him on to topics which would not naturally have presented themselves to his mind, and which, when presented, only seemed of importance to him because I deemed them so. He did not disclose himself to me all at once, but gradually as our mutual humour allowed. His name was Tom Beck. He was the fifth of a family of eleven—four boys and seven girls—of whom eight survived. His father was a farm-labourer, earning fourteen shillings a week. His mother had been a servant-of-all-work in a small family, and added something, though not much, to the family income by taking in washing. They had a little garden and a pig; got presents of tea and flannel occasionally from a charitable society; had the privilege of getting sticks for fuel in the neighbouring woods and plantations; got coal at half-price from the coal store established by the squire and the parish gentry; and managed to jog along somehow. His elder brother was a labourer, and married, and the younger children all began to earn a little as soon as they were ten years old, by weeding in the season, if it were only sixpence or a shilling a week. Tom himself earned four shillings a week as a crow-boy, but had to be at his post seven days in the week in the spring season, as the crows "didn't take no account of Sundays." All the family slept in one room. He had never been to any school but a Sunday school; could read a little, but could not write or read writing. Had never heard of the multiplication table, but knew that twice two were four, and twice ten twenty. Did not know how many eight times eight

were, but could count up, he thought, on his fingers, or with stones or bits of stick. Had heard the Bible read, and could repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Had heard of the Mount of Olives, but did not know where it was. He had never heard of the Alps, the Pyrenees, or the Andes. Had heard of the river Jordan. Had never heard of the Thames, the Rhine, or the Mississippi. Had heard of the Dead Sea. Did not know whether it was in England or not. Had never heard of the Atlantic Ocean. Had heard of Jesus Christ; everybody had. He was the son of Abraham and the Virgin Mary. He (Tom Beck) was a Christian. All of us were Christians, except the dogs and horses, and birds and animals. Some dogs were as good as Christians—"they knowed such a deal"—and he sometimes thought as how the old crows were Christians; they were so uncommon sharp. Had often seen an old crow fasten itself upon a sheep's back, and pull the wool out of its back to help build its nest with. Thought that was more like a Christian than a crow—it was so jolly knowing. Crows were not frightened by scarecrows, as he had often seen them sit on the old hats atop of them, and caw, caw, as much as to say, "We don't care, we don't, for such stupid old rubbish as this!" He thought all birds were too cunning to be afraid after the first "go." Just at first they might be scared, but after a day or so they got used to scarecrows, and he had known starlings build their nests in them. He once took three starlings out of a nest, in the stupidest old guy of a scarecrow he had ever seen. If scarecrows were of any good there would be no need of crow-boys. His master would not let him have a gun to shoot at the birds. He wished he would. Said he was not old enough; but he knowed better, and would like nothing so much as to blaze away at them. Crows were afraid of stones and guns, but as for dudmen (scarecrows), the crows precious soon found out as they could do 'em no harm. Had heard of heaven—a place where all the people as were poor in this world were to be rich, and wear golden crowns, and where the squires and such like were to be poor, and not able to get so much as a drop of water when they were thirsty, let alone beer. He did not think this arrangement was unfair. He would like, however, to be rich in this world, and run the chance of the next. Had heard of the devil. Did not understand much about him. Thought

he had great eyes like the red lights of a steam-engine, horns on his head, and a long tail, with which he could lash down a whole plantation of trees if he liked. Could not say as he was much afraid of him. His father warn't. He believed people would be punished if they did wrong, especially if they was found out. Hadn't thought much about it. Where was the use? Parsons understood it. He didn't, and wasn't a going to try till he was older, and then he supposed he should know as much about it as other folks. Had never thought much of what he would like to be when a man. Supposed he should be a farm-labourer, like his father and his brother. Wouldn't mind if he were a soldier. Should rather like it, but was not sure. All the chaps as he heard on, who went for soldiers, went because they had got into scrapes with the "gals." His brother always talked of going for a soldier when he was out of luck, afore he got married. If he, Tom, could be what he liked, he thought he should be a gamekeeper or a poacher. Them was the chaps that lived a jolly life, especially the gamekeepers. Didn't see any harm in poaching. As why? The squire didn't feed the partridges, the pheasants, and the hares, as he did his horses and dogs. Besides, why should the squires have all the fun? He didn't see why a poor boy mightn't have a shot, if he liked. It was better to be a gamekeeper than a poacher, because the gamekeeper was never sent to quod as the poachers was. Poachers wasn't always caught, however, 'cos many gamekeepers was poachers themselves once, and didn't like to be too hard upon their chums. Did he know any poachers? Yes, a good many, but he wasn't going to tell on 'em.

He often in the long winter nights went to the Fox and Goose, the beershop in the village, where they used to meet, and have a smoke and a pint o' beer, and sing songs. They sang such songs as All Round my Hat, Down in Cupid's Garden, Success to the Barley Mow, Betsy Baker, and Cease Rude Boreas. Had heard 'em sing 'Tis My Delight on a Shiny Night. It was a poaching song; but they didn't often sing about poaching. They liked to sing about the gals, and going a courting. A favourite song was the Honest Ploughman. Almost every body as he knowed on could sing it; he could sing some on it himself, not all. He had it by heart, and could say some of it off, but didn't like to sing just then, with only one man listening to him, and no

baccy and beer about.* He liked to hear a good song, and so did father. Father could sing prime, though he often said as the hard times had took all the singing out of him.

He supposed he should have to labour on the farm when he grewed up. Would rather do that than be a groom, or a coachman, or a gentleman's servant. He'd like to be a gamekeeper better than anything else in the world, because gamekeepers had to do with birds and animals, and he was fond on 'em. He was uncommon fond o' dogs, but not of horses. Had a terrier-bitch of his own, which was a famous one for rats. Was offered five shillings for her, but he wouldn't sell her, no, not for five pounds. Had never seen five pounds all at once, but knew it was a lot of tin, and should like to have it; but he wouldn't part with Trip for five pounds, nor for six neither. She had four pups last week, and he wouldn't mind selling the pups for a shilling apiece. He had a weasel once as he had tamed, and it used to sleep in his lap and crawl up his arm to sit upon his shoulder; but it fell in one day with a wild weasel, and ran away with it, and he never saw it again. He was very fond of birds'-nesting, and knew the eggs of all the birds, and the most likely places to find 'em in. Of all the birds in the air, the hawk was the bravest and the prettiest, though the gamekeepers were main savage against them for killing the partridges and pheasants. He thought as how hawks had as much right to live as partridges, and as how the shooting of too many hawks was bad, unless people would shoot off the sparrers and the finches. The finches did more harm

* The ballad referred to is to be found among the Catnach collections, once, and possibly still, so popular among the rural classes. It describes the condition of a farm-labourer "ninety years ago," a time when the farmers' wives milked the cows, and did not wear dandy veils, and gowns made out of silks, and play "the pianny." The honest ploughman took a wife to himself when twenty-five. Though poor, they could keep a pig and a cow. The wife—

Would sit and knit and spin, and he the land would plough,

There nothing was upon a farm at all, he could not do, He found things was different now, 'twas many years ago.

Labourers "lived very contented," and banished pain and grief, and had no occasion to apply for relief to the parish. "But now," continues the song with a hit at the unpopular Poor Law—

But now that I am feeble grown, and poverty do feel, If for relief I go, they shove me into a Whig bastille, For when a man has laboured all his life, to do his country good,

He's respected about as much as a donkey in a wood. His days are past, and he may weep, in misery and woe,

The times are very different now to ninety years ago.

than hawks did; hawks didn't do no harm to farmers that he knowed on; but them finches and sparrers did gobble up such lots of grains and buds as no one knowed but them as watched 'em. Howls, too, was nobby birds, and oughtn't to be shot. He liked to hear 'em in the night, enjoyin' of 'emselfes. A howl was as jolly a bird as ever was. Yes, if he was a gamekeeper, he knowed he'd have to shoot the howls, all on 'em did; along of the game; but as most likely he never should have the luck to be a gamekeeper, he wouldn't shoot a howl, even if he had a gun. He'd much rather shoot the crows, and the sparrers, and them finches as picked out all the buds off the apple and pear-trees, and the gooseberry and currant bushes. Eat grubs? No, they didn't. He knowed they didn't, not one on 'em.

Yes, he thought he should like to have larnin', if he could get it. But there warn't a school nearer than five miles from his father's cottage; and ten miles walking every day, specially in the rain, warn't no treat. The readin' and spellin' at the Sunday school didn't do much good. He forgot in the week most o' what he'd larned on the Sunday. Would like to be able to write, at least he thought so, but he warn't quite sure. Father and mother couldn't write. Father couldn't read. What would his father do when he was too old to work? Why, go to the 'ouse, to be sure—the union. His grandfather was in the union now, and his grandfather's father had been in the 'ouse, and died in it. He supposed that he should have to go there, if he growed to be an old man, and couldn't work. Why not? It was his right. Them as paid the poor-rates had a right to live. They warn't dogs or donkeys, to be left to die in a ditch. No, he had never been in London. His sister had. She lived there; was a cook to a gentleman as kept a shop in Whitechapel. Oh my, didn't she dress, that was all! Came down to see the old folks once or twice a year, and such a dasher! Such a thingumbob, a chignon some call it, as big as a drum-head cabbage, stuck atop of her poll; and a silk dress, too, and a parasol. It made mother stare, it did, to see how she was rigged out. No; she never gave any of her money to mother, but brought father a little baccy for a Christmas-box. Should like to go to London to live, but hadn't no chance. He couldn't do anything as London folks wanted, except run errands, perhaps; but liked crow-minding far better nor that. Was larnin' to do all kinds of farm work when he had

a chance. Could do a little hedgin' and ditchin', and had once tried to plough, but warn't strong enough. He thought when he was about eighteen or nineteen he should be able to earn good wages, as much as twelve or fourteen shillings a week. He should be a man then, and could do as he liked—smoke, drink, and get married. Too young to get married at nineteen? No; the chaps hereabouts didn't think so, nor the gals neither.

Such was my crow-boy's mind as exhibited by himself in many communications. Such was Tom Beck, such were his wishes and hopes, and such his views of the world and things in general. It will be seen that he was not vicious, nor stupid, but only inert and ill-developed; and that the seeds of good were abundantly latent in him, if there had been any spring-time and sunshine to draw them forth. Will the new Education Act reach him, and such as he, and inspire the agricultural labouring class with the self-respect that springs from true knowledge, however limited it may be? It is to be hoped so. A labourer who labours until his back is bowed with age and sorrow, with no resources after that time but public charity, may be a very good man in his humble and wretched way, but he is not a good citizen of a free and progressive state, or an ornament to our civilisation. The raw material of the English peasant class is as good as that of any peasantry in the world—perhaps, better than most—but it has not hitherto been manufactured into a particularly excellent article, except, now and then, the article "soldier," when the raw material happened to be drunk or desperate, or in the muzzy state that lies between the two. The Scottish peasantry, who are well educated, and have been for the last two centuries and more, are not contented to remain peasants. Why should there be a difference between them and their English fellow-labourers? And if there be a difference between the two, may not education remove it?

TWO SIDES OF A STORY.

GRETCHEN'S FIRST CHAPTER. OUT IN THE WORLD.

It still makes my heart ache to remember how desolate I was when left alone in London. I felt Kitty as completely cut off from me as Fan, and when Ned was really gone I could scarcely be brave enough to feel sure he would come back. My old landlady, though a kind soul, was rather a

Job's comforter. Ned had told her of our engagement, and had said to her at parting, "Remember, Mrs. Rice, I am leaving my wife in your hands." She was very attentive to me, and would often come in of an evening to drink tea with me. She seemed to think that this was part of her duty as my keeper. She would arrive in her best cap, and bearing in her hands a Sally-lunn of her own making. She would tell me about the children of her daughter, who kept a millinery shop in Oxford-street, and she would ask me many questions about Fan and Kitty, for Ned had left me likenesses of both for my comfort, and I had them hanging up over my fire-place. Kitty was the great woman of the family in her eyes. Fortunately she thought my father dead long ago, and so I was spared her speculations on the subject of his disappearance. I felt at a loss just once, when she asked me where he was buried. She was eloquent about Ned, though she evidently thought the chances were against his coming back to marry me. She told me of a young man who had courted her daughter Jane. And he went away to sea. And he never was heard of again; and Jane lay down and died. I used to wonder whether, if Ned should never come back, I should lie down and die?

I had tried to believe that my father must be dead. It was easier to think him dead than that he had heartlessly deserted us. I kept myself at peace, and attended to my work. But soon I found that another serious trouble was in store for me. My eyes began to fail me of the very acute sight that was needful for engraving. A doctor whom I consulted bade me at once give it up. With much regret I left my kind master's workroom, and accepted a situation as nursery governess.

My future dwelling was to be a nursery at Queen's-gate. My few books and pictures must be taken down and set up in a small closet-bedroom, where I was to sleep with a fiery little miss, who had already scratched me for trying to kiss her. I had made up my mind that Queen's-gate children were not like other kinds of children, and I dared not think of Fan, with her soft lips against my face. Coming home one evening, after completing my new arrangements, I reflected on these things with a heavy weight on my heart, and longed for a letter from Ned to make me glad. A letter lay on the table, and I snatched at it eagerly; but I grew dizzy and strange as I recognised the writing.

The letter was from my father. He was

well, he said, and he sent me twenty pounds. He hoped that Fan was better, and that I stuck to my work. He would send us a little money from time to time. He thought it would be an excellent thing if we would consent to go to America or Australia. At the latter place women were in demand, and we should be sure to make good matches. I was a pretty girl enough, and Fan would be much handsomer. He would try and find the money if I would make up my mind to go. I was on no account to try and find him out, or to ask what he was doing. The letter, which was addressed under cover to my old master, Mr. Jackson, had been posted in London, and a bill for twenty pounds was enclosed in it.

I had no means of knowing more about my father, and was obliged to be obedient, and neither seek to find him, nor learn what was his occupation. I regarded his money with many a troubled misgiving. It was some little comfort that he had remembered my existence, a very little comfort, but that was all. Now, with twenty pounds, what could I not afford to indulge in? I sent a present to Ned, who was properly amazed, and I bought a shawl for Mrs. Rice. I got some clothes for myself, which I needed very badly, and made a tidy appearance in my new situation.

I soon found that it is not easy to please, even when one tries one's best. On the first day, when I sat down to lessons with the children, their mother came up to the nursery, as if afraid that they might learn something. The eldest girl was interrupted in her lesson, and sent off to nurse to have her hair curled more elegantly.

"I cannot bear to see you with it so negligently dressed," said the mother. "I could not bear to think of it as I sit in the drawing-room. You see, Miss Fairfax, I like everything in order."

The little boy was also dismissed to have different coloured rosettes put on his shoes, so that our class was broken up. And then her eyes lighted on me.

"You will excuse me, Miss Fairfax, but I do so dislike black! A person dressed in black is such a dreary-looking object to have in the house. And I like especially to see young people looking a little smart and gay."

The next day I arrayed myself in a light-coloured muslin. It was made very simply, with a tucker at the neck, and a blue ribbon round the waist. I thought this much better, but I quite got into disgrace.

"Really," said my mistress, "this is

quite a young lady. Such very flighty attire is exceedingly unbecoming. If there is anything that offends me it is to see a servant dressed up."

The lady's mind was just as changeable where her children's lessons were concerned. One day Freddy ought not to be asked to learn spelling. It was too great a strain. Children learnt spelling by instinct when they grew older. But the next day Freddy's letter to his papa was quite disgraceful. She really thought Miss Fairfax might teach him a little spelling. At last she found out that I knew nothing about the violin, which was a great drawback, and could not be got over. She had heard of a nursery governess who taught the rudiments of the violin. And really a nursery governess ought to teach the rudiments of everything. So I was ordered to pack my trunks, and depart out of Queen's-gate.

I next went as sick nurse to a dying woman in a grand, gloomy house in Russell-square. Her wits were very keen, and she wanted to be amused. I read to her, told her stories, and prayed with her when I dared. Sometimes she was able to have a drive in her carriage, and then we rolled slowly through the gay places of the world, and she groaned as she went along, because the people would not miss her when she was gone. She told me it was only in the night time that she could believe in another world. In the day time she believed only in the sunshine; in laughing faces; in high-stepping horses and brilliant dinner-tables, in rich brocade gowns, and diamonds, and flower-gardens. She used to sit and gaze at me, envying me my youth and my health, my hair, which she called pretty, my eyes, and my very teeth. Sometimes, when nervous from her companionship and the gloom of her house, I got a momentary superstition that she would steal these things from me in some unholy way. I tried to be tender to her, and she liked to have me with her. I was alone with her when she died, for the servants were having a supper-party, and the doctor had paid his visit for the night and gone away. I did what I could to give her up with fitting reverence into the hands of her God. She left me some gay coral earrings and a necklace of pearls, "so that," said the will, "she may dress herself and look pretty while her little day lasts."

All this time Mr. Lance had been punctual, and the thought of his dear face and strong arm had been a constant joy to me, so that nothing made me fear, and sad-

ness was only a shadow that passed away. There is just one black period of a day and a night that lies like a blot on my wholesome memory of those waiting, working years. It is not pleasant now to look back on it, but I have promised Ned to write truly, and this would not be a faithful picture if I did not put in the darkest touch, as well as the highest light.

One morning while I lived in Russell-square, my former landlady, Mrs. Rice, came to pay me a visit. She was accustomed to visit me at intervals, bringing a cake of her own baking. But on this occasion her hands were empty, and when she saw me she fell to wiping her eyes and dropping curtsies. I knew of old this sad apologetic pantomime, which was always with her the preface to ill news. My first thought was that her curly-headed grandson had got to heaven out of the measles; my next that the mother herself was dead, leaving Curly-Head to his grandmother. For either of these troubles I should have been very grieved indeed, for Mrs. Rice was a faithful friend to me. I took her to my own room, and prepared to condole with her.

"Oh, miss dear," she said, bursting into tears, "sorry I am to have to bring you such news, but he have gone and married, he have, in spite of his soft eyes and kind ways; which I'm sure they was most delightful when you did not know how they would end."

"Who has got married?" I asked.

"Mr. Lance, miss; your husband as was to have been."

"Nonsense, Mrs. Rice," I said; "what an exceedingly silly story. I am not such a baby as to listen to it."

Mrs. Rice did not like to be contradicted, and to have any statement that she made ridiculed was altogether more than her patience could endure.

"Well," she said, wiping her eyes resolutely, as if she thought tears were wasted on me, and tightening her shawl round her with a twitch of resentful dignity, "I don't know about silly stories, miss, but all I can say is, as how my Mary Ann, being in Paris at the time on account of the spring fashions, beheld your young gentleman in a church, putting a ring on a fine young lady, as busy as could be. And if that ain't marrying, it's what used to go by the name. But I don't know her name, and I don't know her name, and I don't know her name."

"Your daughter does not know Mr. Lance's appearance," I said, stoutly.

"Not know his appearance!" cried Mrs.

Rice. "Well, there is a good 'un! Her as used to see him constant goin' up and down my hall of an evening when she came for a quiet shrimp and a cup of tea with me in my parlour. And didn't she know him when he went to buy that duck of a little bonnet from her as arrove for you afterwards as a surprise on Christmas Eve? Howsomever, if you don't believe my story, miss, it's high time I was a taking of myself off."

"Good-bye, Mrs. Rice," I said, "and I don't believe your story."

When she was gone I returned to my duties, and tried to forget her visit and her news. But everything was a trouble to me. I felt weary and ill, and terrible fears kept pressing on my mind. By evening I was white in the face with trying to keep them at bay. It was part of my day's work to sit for two hours every evening, silent and motionless, in my mistress's large front bedroom, while she slept. It was dark in the room, and I dared not have lights lest my patient should be disturbed. On this particular evening I found this duty very hard, as I could not do anything to divert my thoughts from the one haunting subject. My will was firm, never to doubt Ned, unless he told me himself that he had deserted me, yet my treacherous imagination kept running on the likelihood of his having been tempted to do so. Why should he keep faithful to a poor creature like me? It was true that I could love him and make him happy too, but there must be many in the world who would readily undertake to do the same. Perhaps they would do it better, for poverty is no beautifier of exteriors, and some rich and beautiful woman might have aspired to be his wife. I wrought myself nearly frantic between conjuring up these fancies, and striving to beat them down when they had risen up before me. But all the while I fancied that I had kept a fast trust in Ned. I found myself thinking over his late letters, recalling words and phrases, and asking myself could it be possible he could have written so on the eve of forgetting me for ever? I said it was not possible, but I felt weary enough for my grave when the two hours were ended. I got lights then, and as I closed the curtains over a mirror, I saw myself faded and pinched, and ten years older-looking than I had been in the morning. No imaginary bride seemed to glimmer out of the recesses of the room, and to gaze over my shoulder with a pitying smile. I saw the glow of her perfect

loveliness, and the glitter of her satins and her pearls. She was a wife fit for Ned, and she would help him with her gold more than could empty-handed Gretchen, even with the most loving care in the world. Stupefied with the reality of this idea, I sat down to my work before the lamp. My mistress, now awake, lay and watched me with her keen, searching eyes. I had forgotten her presence, until her voice made me start.

"Is anything the matter with your lover, child?"

She knew all about Ned, and that he was my only friend. She had often shown a lively interest as to the likelihood of our marriage.

"No, madam," I said, quickly.

"Then why do you look so grey and dead? Has he written you a cross letter, or is he faithless?"

"Nothing of the kind," I said; "I have only got a headache."

And as I spoke I determined that it must be the truth which I was telling. If I had confessed my trouble all the cynical side of her temper would have been roused by such a story. She would have gloated over the faithlessness of man, and groaned for days about the general unkindness of human nature. This would have been more than I could bear, so I kept my own counsel. A long feverish night and day followed, in spite of my self-assurance that I was satisfied and at ease. Towards dusk the next evening I could endure suspense no longer. That day was the day on which a letter was due from Ned, and no letter had come. I asked leave of my mistress to take a walk down Gower-street to see my friend, Mrs. Rice. I sent a maid to sit with her till my return, and I flew to my own room to put on my bonnet. I had no plan formed as to what I should say to Mrs. Rice, but I felt that I must speak to somebody or go mad.

I stood at the window while I tied on my bonnet. It was just getting dark, and the lamps were being lighted. I saw a figure crossing the square, from a corner of the side-walk round the railings of the garden. It was coming towards the house, and I seemed to know the figure.

I remembered nothing more for some two or three minutes, and after that I found myself lying on the ground with my forehead slightly cut, and with a sort of belief that I had been dead, and was returning, like Lazarus, out of the jaws of the grave. I had fainted, for the first time in my life, with the joy of seeing Ned, who,

had been coming across the square. When I got up on my feet again, I knew by my numb brains and tottering limbs how great my struggle had been. I went to meet Ned, and slipped my arm through his. I did not ask him a question, for I felt when I saw him that the question which I could ask would be an insult. He had come all the way from Paris for no purpose but to see me. No letter had arrived in the morning because he himself was on the way. As we walked along together I told him that little story about his wedding. We went at once to Mrs. Rice to set her right, and she gave us tea and muffins, besides a shower of apologetic tears for having ever put her belief in that great gowk Mary Ann, who had an eye for nothing but the colour of a ribbon, and couldn't be sure of her own children if she met them a mile away from home!

When my mistress died I was again upon the world. It was now four years since I had lost my father, and Kitty, and Fan, all at once. I advertised for a new situation. This time I offered myself as companion to a lady. Very quickly I had an answer to my advertisement. The answer was from a lady in the country. She offered a good salary and a pleasant home. I accepted the situation without delay. The lady was a Mrs. Sutherland, of the Sycamores, Hopshire. After I had agreed to go to her, it struck me, while turning over her letter, that Sutherland was the name of the gentleman who had inherited Ned's fortune. How odd if I should be domesticated in the house of this very man! When writing to Ned I suggested this idea. In replying, he assured me that I had engaged myself as companion to the wife of that Sutherland who had been so singularly lucky. The Sycamores, in Hopshire, was his country seat. He had married within a year after inheriting his fortune.

It was a snowy winter's day when I set out upon my journey, and Hopshire looked a ghostly world, with its tall, snow-wreathed woods, and white, silent fields. I could not help thinking, as I spun along in the train, that there were very odd chances in the world, seeing that at one time it must have been a toss up with Fate whether I, Gretchen Fairfax, should be mistress of the Sycamores, instead of the wealthy Mrs. Sutherland, under whose roof I was this day seeking leave to earn my bread. I left the train at a small, bleak-looking station, and looked anxiously about for a vehicle of some description, for I had

yet two miles to drive before I could reach my destination. To my great surprise I was told that a carriage was waiting for me. I found it a very fine carriage, with two high-stepping horses, and thought this a very good beginning, so that my spirits were quite cheered. I enjoyed my ride across the dim, white country as the night began to fall, and red lights sprang up in the hollows, and the evening firelight shone ruddily out of the open cottage doorways. Arrived at the Sycamores, I was driven down a magnificent avenue, sweeping between high-spreading trees. A river, now half-frozen, lay at the feet of densely wooded slopes and far-stretching lawns. I got a peep at the flower-gardens, where the hot-houses showed a gorgeous warmth of colour, but where the pale-cheeked beauties, whose place was in open air, shivered under the white wrappings that the snow had provided for them. The house was noble and ancient, and glowed at me with a promise of stately welcome. There was just light enough to enable me to trace the heavy ornamentations of the mullioned windows. Urns full of burning red plants were placed along the terraces, and up the wide-spreading steps; and even in the twilight they made a brilliant contrast to the thickly piled snow. I was at once shown into the drawing-room, which was lit up by the flames of a vast wood fire, which glowed and crackled on the glittering steel hearth. A lady came to meet me, and said she was Mrs. Sutherland.

She was a beautiful creature, about five or six years older than myself, and was attired in full evening dress, which struck my unaccustomed eyes as unusually splendid. She wore a long flowing robe of white satin, and her neck was heavily covered with chains of gold and pearls. Her hair and arms and bodice were decked with pearls, and she wore a bouquet of scarlet exotics in her bosom. Her face was dark and rich-looking, suggesting a warmer clime than this, yet she had all the delicacy of feature of an English woman. I remembered at the moment that Ned had said that Mrs. Sutherland had been a West Indian heiress. Indeed she looked like one on whom the bounties and tendernesses of the world had been showered, so lovely and sumptuous was she in her beauty and its adornments. Never had I seen a creature in the least like to her before. She came rapidly to meet me, with a strange look of anxiety and timidity on her face.

"I am glad you are come," she said. "If I had known a little sooner that you

were coming this evening I should not have engaged myself to go out."

"Oh, madam, do not mind me," I said, eagerly enough. "I assure you I am not used to be treated with so much ceremony." And I wondered very much at her; her manner was so kind.

She removed my cloak and bonnet, and drew me nearer to the firelight, so that she could see me the more plainly. She seemed to like me the better after a short examination, in which there was nothing to offend. She stroked down my hair, and put her hand under my chin, and raised up my face, and looked wistfully in my eyes.

"I am going to be so good to you," she said, "oh, so good, if you will let me."

"Don't, dear madam," I said; "just wait a little, I beg you. Who knows how you may dislike me when you know me a little longer?"

"I think not," she said, releasing me, "but I do not doubt that you may be wiser than I. In the mean time, I am neglecting you. Are you cold? Are you hungry? Dinner will be served for you in your own apartments. May I bring you there at once before I go?"

She led me through two or three rooms, the splendour of which dazzled me, and then up a mighty staircase, with paintings on the walls, and lamps burning softly in mid air. We travelled a long wide corridor, till I thought we had gone a mile, and on either side were pictures and statues, and cabinets of curiosities, screens and fantastic seats; and here and there little tables, with toys, and books, and gems. At last we came to my apartments, for it was a fact that I, who had been happy to possess a closet bedroom, had got a suite of apartments set aside for my own use. I had a charming sitting-room, with rose-silk hangings, and a carpet like the woodland moss. The walls seemed made of mirror, except where pictures filled a space. The daintiest ornaments were disposed through the room, and flowers had not been forgotten. The fire blazed merrily, and softly shaded lamps burned on their brackets. A round table was laid with service for dinner, adorned with glass and silver of the most exquisite workmanship. I was much startled and amused to see that all these things were for me. Abou Hassan was not more amazed at waking in the Caliph's chamber than was I by this reception which I met with at the Sycamores. My love of the beautiful was very strong indeed, and it was a passion which had been very little ministered to of late.

"Can it really be for me?" I cried, in delight.

Mrs. Sutherland flushed with pleasure. "Really for you," she said. "But I am going to make a bargain: I want a little love."

"There will be no difficulty in that," I said, and I felt it keenly as I said it.

"Do you think so?" she said, and her eyes filled with tears. "I have so wanted a little love. I have so watched and prepared for you in the hope that you would care for me. If you love me I will be good to you in a way that you little think of."

She embraced me then with a curious tenderness, and hurried away to her party through the cold winter night.

The next day my new life begun. My chief duty seemed to be to submit to be caressed and amused by Mrs. Sutherland. She entertained herself a whole week showing me all the rooms in her vast house; which was, indeed, such a place as I had never seen before. Every thing was a wonderment to me, and that delighted her greatly. She showed me her splendid jewels, and her strange things from India. There was a half-barbaric love of brilliancy and movement and pleasure about her, and she was nervous and timid, and could not bear being alone. But she was easily amused, and sometimes made me think of some happy savage child playing with the sunbeams and gay flowers of her native forest. The only thing that kept her quiet when in good-humour was a huge piece of tapestry, into which she stitched birds of showy plumage, and blossoms of vivid hues. She played for me mad fantastic music, which must have been created by herself, for I never heard the like of it, either before that time or since. She hated reading and thinking, and was subject to fits of melancholy. She discovered that I had the art of telling stories, and when her sad moods came upon her I could cure her by the practice of this simple art. When all the wonderful stories I had ever heard of were exhausted, I passed half my nights inventing fresh ones against her next hours of gloom.

Mr. Sutherland was from home, and I heard nothing of him beyond the fact that it was uncertain when he would return. I noticed that the mention of Mr. Sutherland brought a look of trouble which was half fear into his wife's beautiful face. She did not know where he was; he was fond of going about. No letters were exchanged between them, and she seldom

mentioned his name. He was almost always absent, but he was glad that she should amuse herself. She had visitors. All the families around her came to her house, and she was fond of going to balls and dinner-parties, and other entertainments. After these excursions she used to look worn and fatigued, and at times seemed so ill that I begged she would give them up. It was evident to me that her health was very frail, but she could not bear to hear of this, and almost quarrelled with me for hinting it. I felt from the first a lively wonder as to whether she would really come to love me, or would by-and-bye get tired of me. After some weeks of companionship with her my own heart got interested in this question, for I really became fond of her, with her beauty and her tenderness, and her innocent love of pleasure. After a time this wonder became appeased to my satisfaction. Mimi, as she would have me call her, began to lose her taste for gaieties, and would enjoy herself more thoroughly at her fireside with me than dancing amongst flatterers many miles away from her home.

"Ah!" she said, sadly, "if I had had a sister like you I should have been a different woman."

I smiled, and asked her what she thought she should have been.

"Useful and happy," she said. "As it is, I am nothing but an encumbrance in the world."

"That is a foolish speech," I said.

"What would your husband say to it?"

"My husband?" she said, bitterly. "He would think I was right for once in my silly life."

At that time I did not know as I knew afterwards that there was no love between this husband and wife. Bit by bit she unfolded to me the story of her marriage. Her husband had seemed to love her for a month or more, and she thought bitterly that she ought to have been grateful for so much; as on her part she had never cared for him at all. She had a lover who had loved her truly, and who had died; and after he was dead she had not cared what might become of her. Her guardians had urged her to accept Mr. Sutherland. He was of a fine old English family, and she was only a half-caste. She had thought that in wedding him she must at least be a prized and petted wife. But he had tired of her soon, and lived most of his time away from home.

It was long before I knew that she had had a baby, and had lost it. It was not

until we became closer friends, and she had grown more home-loving and contented, that she showed me her inmost heart, in which the dead baby lived. It had been far more precious to her, that baby, than even my Fan had been to me. I had had Ned to console me, but it seemed that she had no one. She wept her very heart out on my breast the first time she spoke of it, but in time she could talk of it quietly, and one day she even took me to the tortoise-shell cabinet where lay, saved up in smooth order, the pretty cast-off clothing of the little one.

"I used to think I should go mad when I looked at them," she said, "and yet I could not keep my eyes off them, and used to wander about the house with this key in my hand. A good neighbour assured me that I ought to give them to the poor, and that that would help to take the sting out of my heart. I tried to do it, but I could not; and I feel ever since as if the poor were reproaching me for keeping them lying idle here."

I suggested to her that she and I might spend the winter evenings pleasantly in making other clothes like these, of more useful materials, to be given to the poor babies whose nakedness so distressed her. She grasped at this idea, and soon we were very busy with calico and flannel. In the mean time, as we worked I told her stories of my Fan, and of other lost children. And from that date forth I believe she loved me indeed.

One day at last she got a letter from her husband, saying he would be home on a certain day, and bidding her give a handsome ball to celebrate his arrival. Mr. Sutherland, it seemed, liked to keep up a delusion in the minds of his neighbours that he was obliged to live a good deal on the Continent for his health, but was glad to come back, when possible, to the country and his wife. But Mimi turned pale when she read his unwelcome letter.

"You will be glad of a little gaiety," I said. "You have not had any for so long." And I kept my eyes away from her, lest she should be ashamed of the trepidation into which the prospect of her husband's coming had thrown her.

"No," she said, "I have grown sick of all that, and have been so happy with only you. Gretchen, dear, you will be very careful to be friendly with Mr. Sutherland. He has some odd fancies, and—and—he does not even know that you are here. He has been so long away, and it was of no use telling him. I had a right to have you,

or any one I pleased. I trust he will take it well—your presence I mean—which has been such an unutterable comfort to me.”

I felt a little startled, and not very comfortable, at this new view of things, which was thus put before me. To be in a house, of which the master might disapprove of me when he appeared, was not very pleasant, to say the least. But I thought only of the fear that he might insist on my dismissal. For I had hoped to stay with Mimi till such time as Ned might want me.

Mimi had now to obey her husband's orders, and make ready for her ball. Mr. Sutherland liked to have everything done in very grand style, and Mimi was full of anxiety to have all in such order as could not fail to please him. She insisted on my appearing in the ball-room, and, to remove all difficulties, gave me a beautiful Indian muslin to wear on the occasion. The pure whiteness of the dress was relieved by the handsome coral ornaments which had been bequeathed me by my poor dead mistress. I thought of the words of her will as I clasped them round my throat and in my ears—“That she may wear them and look pretty while her little day lasts.” I wondered how much longer my little day was destined to last at the Sycamores. I certainly did not know myself when my toilet was complete, and I owned to a foolish wish that Ned had been there to see the change.

I took my place quite early in a corner of the drawing-room to see the guests arrive, for this was a sight which I had never seen before. In they poured, bevies of fair women, in their silks and their satins, and their other fine fabrics. The mothers were all handsome, and the daughters all lovely. They appeared so radiant, so happy, and so splendid, that I seemed to see women out of fairyland. I could not detect an ill-tempered nor a troubled woman amongst them. I could not follow any of these women to their own homes, it is true, to prove whether they were perfection indeed, or only looked it. But I preferred to believe them what they appeared to be that night. They smiled, and smiled, and fluttered their fans and their laces, as if brimming full of good-humour, and only longing for some object upon which to pour it forth. The men, also, looked strong and brave, and as manly as men should be. I believed that I made acquaintance with a new race, different from the human beings

whom I had seen crowding London streets. And Mimi was queen of them all, as she received her handsome guests.

Almost all the folks had arrived, and yet there was no Mr. Sutherland to be seen. He had not arrived at the Sycamores, when I took my place in the drawing-room. I kept my eyes on the door, wondering if I should know him when he entered, if I should guess by something in his bearing that this was the master of the house. I grew tired with watching, and yet I was sure that I had not seen him.

There was standing by me all this time a gentleman whom Mimi had introduced to me early. He was one of those fine-looking men whom I had admired so much, and he told me many anecdotes of sporting life, and seemed satisfied with me for a companion, though I had very little to say to him. I gave him, indeed, a very divided attention. As I shall have to mention this person again, I may call him Mr. Field.

My head kept running upon Mimi and her husband. This seemed to me such a strange way for them to meet after so long a separation. I wondered if others would think so besides myself. I turned from this thought to give my attention to Mr. Field. When I looked towards the door again I saw a figure entering, whose apparition made my heart stand still. I believed that I saw my father come into the room.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LV. THE JOURNEY BEGINS.

MONDAY came; and it was now evening, and about the hour at which Lady Vernon had ordained that Maud was to set out upon her journey to Carsbrook.

The carriage was now at the door. The boxes were on top, and Jones, ready dressed for the journey, was in the hall.

Maud was also in travelling costume, the pleasant excitement of her excursion for a moment quelled by the pending interview with her mother.

Oh, that she could have gone without seeing her!

In the hall she told Jones to get into the carriage. The sight of her maid in her place, smirking through the carriage window on the familiar front of the old house, at which she peeped at intervals when she was not busy with the internal arrangements of the carriage, was satisfactory; it assured her that her journey to Carsbrook was a reality. The feeling of uncertainty, until she should be well out of reach of Roydon and the practicable range of a capricious recal, made her a little feverish.

Jones's fussy frown had left her quite, as she smirked through the open window at her young mistress. Maud smiled in return, in spite of her little alarm. Then she receded into the shadow of the hall, and peeped at the door opening into the suite of drawing-rooms, trying to gather courage for the dreaded leave-taking.

She entered the first drawing-room, and passed from one to another in succession, with the nervous feeling of one who is taking possession of a hostile magazine, and does not know the moment when an unseen train may explode it and blow all into air.

She had now passed through all the drawing-rooms, but her mother was not in any one of them. She must seek her in that room which was not cheered by a single pleasant association, a room of which Maud had the secret dread with which a suspected person eyes the council chamber.

She knocked at the door, but Lady Vernon was not there.

Maud was relieved by her failure; she returned to the drawing-room, and touched the bell. A footman entered.

The footman did not know whether her ladyship had gone out, or whether she might be up-stairs; but she was not in the shield-room, or in any of the rooms at that side. The butler, having something particular to tell her, had looked there only a few minutes before.

"Could some one send mamma's maid to me?"

In due time Latimer appeared in the drawing-room, and Maud said:

"Mamma told me, Latimer, that I was to go at four o'clock, and the horses are waiting, and I don't know where to find her, to bid her good-bye. Can you tell me?"

"I think she is in her morning room, up-stairs, miss. Do you wish me to see?"

"Yes, Latimer, please. Will you tell her what I have said, and find out what she wishes?" answered Maud.

Latimer returned in a few minutes, and said:

"Her ladyship says, miss, if you'll please to wait a short time, she will send for you so soon as she is at leisure."

"Very well; thanks, Latimer," said Maud, and she went to the window and looked out upon the court-yard, very ill pleased at the delay. In a little time she saw the coachman drive the horses, at a

walk, a short way up and down the avenue, and round the court-yard; she thought the delay would never end; wondered what her mother could intend by it, and went from window to window, and sat down, and stood up again.

More than half an hour passed, before a footman arrived to inform Maud that Lady Vernon awaited her in the shield-room.

Thither she took her way, and found Lady Vernon alone in that stately and spacious room. She was standing at the further end, looking from one of the windows, when Maud entered.

Hearing the door close, she turned.

"I am not sorry, Maud, that you don't leave this quite so early as I at first intended. No, I am rather pleased."

"I think," said Maud, who was vexed profoundly at the delay, "that it is almost a pity. But of course, whatever you think best. They tell me it will take a little more than five hours to reach Lady Mardykes's house; and it would be uncomfortable, I'm afraid, getting there very late."

"Your arriving half an hour late, or an hour late, or two hours late, will cause Lady Mardykes no uneasiness," said her mother; "nor any other person. Pray allow me to direct the manner in which my own servants, carriages, and horses shall be employed, and you will find that I am quite competent to carry out any arrangements which, while you remain in my charge, may appear desirable."

Though Lady Vernon spoke, as usual, with a calm manner and in cold tones, her faint smile expressed something of positive antipathy, and there were, in her measured emphasis, evidences of strangely intense and bitter temper, to which Maud was not accustomed.

These signs irritated, but also awed Miss Vernon. There was something of the malignity of suffering in the gloom of her address, and Maud instinctively shrank from any betrayal of feeling which, in Lady Vernon's mood, might possibly lead to a sudden countermand of the entire expedition.

"From me you don't deserve confidence," she said, suddenly. "You have given me none. I should not accept it now. But I know all I need know; from whom you receive letters among the rest. Don't speak; don't answer. I will have no altercation. What I allude to I know. You have been no child to me. I have been, you'll say, no mother to you. It is false. I look into my heart and life, of which you know nothing, and I see that I have done, am

doing, and, with Heaven's help, will do, my duty. I am sacrificing myself, my feelings, for you and for others. Yes, for you—for you, at this moment. I don't care, with that comfort, what may be said or fancied. What is it to me what the wicked and frivolous may say or think? I do my duty by you always, steadily, and I defy them. I and you, we are what we are. There; go. No good-byes. Only remember, wherever you are, duty rules my life; my care shall follow you."

With these odd words she turned away, and left the room by the side-door, and Maud was alone. Glad she was that the interview was over, and she at liberty.

The shadow of this cloud did not rest long upon her, black as its transit had been.

She and her maid were presently driving at a swift trot away from Roydon. She had not driven a mile away, when that unnatural parting began to recede in her mind, before the free and sunny prospect opening before her at Carsbrook.

"You never were at Carsbrook, Jones?" said Miss Vernon to her maid, for the tenth time during the last week. "No. I forgot I asked you that before. I should not wonder, Jones, if I were to leave you there. Miss Medwyn is a great match-maker, and three of her own maids have been married from her house."

"Marriages is made in heaven, miss, they say; but I don't see many wives that would not be maids again if they could. I might 'a been married a many a time if I would. And if I would change my mind there's many a one would take me, if they thought I'd have them, without going all the way to Carsbrook."

"Oh, yes; but I mean a very eligible match. No matter; my cousin Max will look about, and we'll be satisfied with nothing less."

"La, miss! do give over your nonsense!"

"We change horses five or six times on the way to Carsbrook. What o'clock is it now?" She looked at her watch. "About half-past four. What a good pace he is driving at. We shall be there before ten, I think."

The evening tints were over the landscape by the time they reached the Green Dragon—a lonely posting-house near Dornbury Common.

"We'll tell them to make us some tea. Here, Jones, what do you think? Should not you like it?"

"Thanks, miss, very much; I should like it very well, miss, please."

By this time the horses came to a standstill before the pretty little inn; the ostlers shuffled out to take the horses off; and Maud ran into the house under a fragrant bower of jessamine and honey-suckle.

They look out upon the quiet slopes and rather hungry sheep-walks that surround the Green Dragon, and make it solitary, through a little window that makes a frame of dark leaves and roses round.

Here they take their tea in high spirits. And this little repast over, they walk out upon the platform before the porch.

The horses are, by this time, put to; and from this elevated point of view Maud looks towards Roydon Hall, now seventeen miles away, exactly in the direction where the sun is now sinking from view.

It is a strange, wild, ominous sunset. Long floods of clear saffron flush into faint flame, and deep purple masses, like piles of battle-smoke, load the pale sea of green above. The sun dives into its abyss of fire. Black clouds, like girding rocks, with jagged edges heated dazzling as flame, encircle its descent with the yawn of a crater; and, high in air, scattered flocks of cloud, like the fragments of an explosion, hang splendouring the fading sky with tongues of fire. The sun is now quite down; all is gradually darkening. The smoke is slowly rolling and subsiding, and the crater stretches up its enormous mouth, and breathes out a blood-red vapour that overspreads the amber sky, and meets the sinking masses; and so the vaporous scenery fades and blackens, leaving on Maud's mind a vague sense of the menacing and portentous.

When she takes her place in the carriage she is silent; she is thinking of her mother's oracular and incoherent leave-taking, and she sees her pale, handsome face, and flitting smile, and does not know whether they indicate more suffering or dislike.

But is she not leaving Roydon and its troubles fast and far behind her, and is she not driving now with four good trotters, at an exhilarating pace, towards her dear old cousin Max, towards Carsbrook, and its pleasant excitements, towards her new and hospitable friend, its charming hostess, and towards a possible meeting still more interesting?

CHAPTER LVI. THE PIG AND TINDER-BOX.

SOON the pleasant moon was shining, and silvered all the landscape.

In one of Swift's picturesque illustrations he describes the hilarity with which

a party of friends ride out on a journey; in the morning how spruce they look, how they talk and laugh, and admire all they see, and enjoy everything, and how bespattered, silent, and spiritless, after some hours in the saddle, the same party arrive at their journey's end.

Something of this, in a modified way, our travellers experienced, as they approached the Pig and Tinder-box, the fourth posting-house, where they were to change horses.

It is a larger building than the Green Dragon, and older a great deal, with a porch of Charles the First's time, and a portion of the building as old as Queen Elizabeth's.

This inn, like the others along the posting line, depends in no sort upon its neighbourhood for support. A well-kept road across a melancholy moor, called Haxted Heath, passes its front. The Pig and Tinder-box is nine-and-twenty miles away from the chimneys of Roydon Hall, and about sixteen from Carsbrook.

Maud has ceased to enjoy the mere sense of locomotion, and has got into the state in which the end of a journey is looked forward to with satisfaction. She looks out of the carriage window, and sees the road stretching over the black moor, in the moonlight, like a strip of white tape.

Beside it show, at first dimly, the gables and chimneys of the Pig and Tinder-box, with the outlines of its stables and offices, and the poplars and chestnuts that grow near it.

Listlessly she looks on, and thinks she sees a carriage before its door.

"Look out, Jones, and tell me, is that a carriage before the door of the inn?"

Jones stretches her neck from the window twice as far as is necessary.

"A waggon, miss, I think," said she, without interrupting her scrutiny to pull her head in. "No—is it? Well, I do believe it does look like a carriage, rayther."

"Let me look, Jones," said Miss Maud, tapping her shoulder. "I hope they are not taking our horses."

Miss Vernon looked out, and now plainly saw a carriage standing upon the road, with the horses' heads turned towards them. A post-boy in top-boots was in front, at the horses' bridles. The moonlight showed all this distinctly, and his comrade, partly hid in the black shadow of the old building, and partly revealed by the lamp-light that shone from the porch, was talking to some one inside.

It was plain that these people now heard the clink and rumble of the approaching

coach-wheels, for the man at the porch, pointing along the road in their direction, turned towards his companion, who forthwith led his horses toward them a little, drawing up at the side of the road.

The Roydon carriage passed this swiftly by, and drew up before the porch of the Pig and Tinder-box.

The landlady waddled out swiftly in front of the threshold, to receive her distinguished guests.

"You had a letter from Lady Vernon, hadn't you?" inquired the young lady, eagerly, thinking what a mortification it would be to find no horses, and be obliged to put up till morning at this melancholy old roadside inn.

"Yes, miss, sure, everything is ready, as her ladyship ordered; and will your ladyship, miss, please take a cup of tea? I made it when we saw your ladyship's carriage a-coming, jest two minutes ago."

Tea is always tempting on a journey, and although they had taken some scarcely two hours before, Maud agreed, and their hostess showed them into a comfortable panelled room, where tea-things were on the table.

The fat landlady of the Pig and Tinder-box stood with her apron against the table, on which her knuckles leaned, and said:

"I hope, miss, you may find the carriage comfortable."

"Thanks, we are travelling in mamma's."

"But Lady Vernon said in her note, please, miss, that her own was not to go further than this, and I was to furnish a carriage, on——"

"Oh, I did not know; I'm sure it is very nice; I have no doubt we shall find it very comfortable. Jones, you had better go and see that they make no mistake about our boxes and the things in the carriage that are coming on with us."

Jones went off in a fuss. The room in which she left her young mistress is at the end of a passage, which runs to the left from the hall, with some doors opening from it toward the front of the building.

When Jones, in obedience to her young mistress's orders, had got to the foot of the stairs in front of the open hall-door, she saw standing in the entrance of the corresponding passage, at the other side of the hall, a man, with a dark, determined face and fine forehead, about the sternest and gravest-looking man she had ever seen. Judging by his dress you would have supposed him a person in the rank of an upper servant, and he wore a black outside coat

buttoned up to his throat. His hat was in his hand. But judging by his air and countenance you would have taken him for a Jesuit, on a secret service of danger. There was in his face the severity of habitual responsibility, and in the brown eye, that glanced from corner to corner, the penetration and cold courage of a man of action.

He stepped forward as gravely as an undertaker, and speaking low but rapidly, said: "Are you Miss Jones, please?"

"Yes, my name is Jones," said that young lady, with ears erect.

"Miss Vernon's maid?" continued the inquirer.

"Yes, sir," she replied, with dignity and some disdain, for she was not accustomed to be questioned by strangers.

"You have just come, Miss Jones, with the young lady from Roydon?" he added, politely.

"Yes, sir," she again answered, dryly.

"Then, Miss Jones, if you'll be good enough to come this way for a moment, I'll give you a message and a note from Lady Vernon," he continued.

"Certainly, sir," answered Miss Jones, with a little start, and her eyes very wide open. A slight sinking at her heart acknowledged the ominous character of the occurrence.

The dark stranger had a candle in his hand, and led Miss Jones down the passage, at the opposite side of the hall from which he had just emerged.

As she followed him into the room, the door of which stood open, she thought she saw a fat, unpleasant face, which she little expected to see there, smiling from the further end at her.

She stepped back from the door, and looked steadily down the passage; but, if it had really been there, it was gone.

There was a pair of candles in the small room to which he had conducted her, one upon the chimney-piece, the other he had himself placed on the table; and he now snuffed it.

"Lady Vernon desired me, Miss Jones, by letter received this morning, to look after Miss Vernon's luggage here, and to see it transferred all right to the carriage she is going on in. That is done, except your two boxes, which are not to go on."

"But I can't get on at Carsbrook without my two boxes, sir," exclaimed Miss Jones, alarmed for her get-up and decorations. "I shall want every single individual thing I took with me from Roydon!"

"Perhaps, Miss Jones, you would prefer sitting," said the imperturbable stranger, placing a chair, and sliding the candle along the table towards her. "This is the letter which Lady Vernon desires me to give you with my own hand."

At the same time he placed a note in the alarmed young lady's fingers.

She opened it, and read these words:

Roydon Hall, Monday.

REBECCA JONES,—I require your presence here. Therefore, immediately on receiving this note, you will return to Roydon Hall in the carriage in which you left it. Miss Vernon will continue her journey with, for the present, another maid.

BARBARA VERNON.

Miss Jones sniffed once or twice, and felt an odd chill, as she laid this note on the table; and looking with flushed cheeks and undisguised scorn at the courier, she asked, with a little toss of her head:

"And who are you, sir, if I may make bold to inquire?"

"As regards you, Miss Jones, in this present matter, I am Lady Vernon's messenger, and nothing more," he answered, phlegmatically, and smiled, after a pause, showing a row of even, white teeth.

"I think it's a very odd way I'm treated," said Miss Jones, whisking the note, with a little jerk, by the corner. "I don't know no reason why I should be sent to and fro, between Roydon and this, and this and Roydon, back and forward, as if I was good for nothing but to be tossed here and there like a shuttlecock!"

"Very likely, miss," acquiesced the serene messenger.

"And I'll acquaint my young lady, and see what she will say to it," continued Jones, in her indignation, preparing to go direct to her young mistress.

"But we are forbidden to do that, Miss Jones," said this grave person, calmly. "You know Lady Vernon's handwriting?"

"I rayther suppose I ought to," answered Miss Jones, scornfully, with her head very high, and dismay at her heart.

"My directions are strictly to prevent any such thing. Will you be good enough to read this."

He doubled back a piece of the letter, and permitted her to read the following lines:

"I have ordered Rebecca Jones to return immediately to Roydon. She will, therefore, without speaking to Miss Vernon,

take her place again in my carriage, into which you will be so good as to put her, and my servant will immediately drive the carriage back to Roydon, as you advise."

"I have given them their directions," said the man, putting up his letter, "and the carriage, with your two boxes, Miss Jones, waits at the door, to which I will, if you permit me, conduct you now."

"Well, as for me, I'm but a lady's-maid, and I suppose I ought to be thankful to stand anything. Having been Miss Maud's own maid, which no one can deny what I have been to her through many a troubled day and night, ever since she was old enough to have a maid, anything is good enough, and too good for me."

"I think, Miss Jones, Lady Vernon won't like it if you delay here any longer," remarked the quiet man, approaching the door.

"And who's to go with Miss Maud? I'd like to know that, if it's no treason; 'tain't every one that can dress a young lady like she is, and I don't suppose her ladyship could 'a meant I was to leave my young lady without knowing who was to take care of her, and be in charge of her things; and so I should like to know better, before I leave here, who's to go on with her to Carsbrook?"

"Lady Vernon is a very particular lady, I'm told, and she has arranged all that herself, and I have no directions to give you, Miss Jones, except what I have told you."

"Well, it is a queer way, I am sure! I suppose I must do as her ladyship desires. I hope Miss Maud mayn't be the sufferer; and it does seem a bit queer I mayn't so much as say good-bye to her."

There was here a little interrogative pause, as she looked in his face in the hope that he might relent.

"Lady Vernon's directions are plain upon that point," observed the dark-featured man; "and we have delayed too long, I'm afraid, Miss Jones."

"It ain't me, then," said Miss Jones, quickly. "I'm making no delays; I'm ready to go. I said so when I saw her ladyship's note, that instant minute."

"Be so good as to follow me, miss," said the stranger.

And he led the way down the passage, through the kitchen, into the stable-yard, and through the gate, forth upon the road, where the Roydon carriage, with the tired horses, which had just brought them there, were waiting to take crest-fallen Miss Jones back to the Green Dragon.

That young lady was quickly shut up, left to her angry reflections, and the prompt man in black said a word to the coachman, who was again on the box, and another to the footman, who handed his pewter pot, just drained, with some flakes of foam still on its side, to the ostler.

The footman took his seat, and Lady Vernon's carriage and servants, including Jones, much disgusted at her unexpected reverse, began to roll away toward Dormibury Common and distant Roydon.

97 1.

BROOKE-STREET, HOLBORN.

JUST past the monastic gates of Furnival's-inn, and between that den of lawyers and the narrow crowded turning to Gray's-inn-road, there exists a short dingy street, closed at the northern end by the wall of the church of St. Albans. The dim thoroughfare, otherwise quiet, sordid, and dirty enough, resounds at early hours with the appealing bell that summons the low-browed cester-mongers of Brooke's Market, the unkempt roughs of Fox-court, the wild Irishmen of Greville-street, and the mocking organ-boys of Leather-lane. On the right of the street (eastward), as you enter it, stands a curious, truncated building, that looks like a cut-down man-of-war, but really is a huge furniture warehouse, that has been partly burnt down and never properly rebuilt. The houses in Brooke-street are divided amongst the usual petty trades, with here and there a thermometer maker, the overflowing of the Italian colony in Hatton-garden. An alley on the west side leads the evasive pickpocket, who by chance finds himself here beset, into Gray's-inn-road, a turning on the other leads the wayfarer into the Piedmontese settlement of Leather-lane. Of colour, brightness, gaiety, there is no trace here; and even if the sunshine, on some favoured summer sunset, does stream down upon the eastern side of the street, it soon fades away, as if unwilling to make the dullness and dinginess of the locality seem greater upon its departure.

And yet at the end of this street, in Queen Elizabeth's golden reign, rose the town house of a very grand person, a nobleman of the court, and the treasurer of marine causes. Just where St. Albans now stands, dinning Protestant ears with its importunate call to ecclesiastical ceremonials, stood the residence of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, the bosom friend, brother author, and constant companion of that last of the true

knights, Sir Philip Sidney. We venerate the crabbed old poet (incorrigibly bad as his quaint, twisted verses are) because he was a generous and loyal friend to Lord Bacon after his fall, and because he was a persistent patron of authors. He got Ben Jonson's master at Westminster, learned Camden, appointed Clarencieux-at-arms, he discovered the industrious Speed, the historian, on the tailor's board. He used to say, forgetful of all claims to statesmanship, that he only wished to be known to posterity as "Sidney's friend, Shakespeare's and Ben Jonson's master, and the patron of Lord Chancellor Egerton and Bishop Overall." This former magnate of Brooke-street sprang from an illustrious Warwickshire stock, and claimed alliance with Neville Beauchamp and Willoughby de Brookes; and Sidney was his kinsman, for Sidney claimed descent from the Beauchamps, too, through the blood of the Dudleys, Grays, and Talbots. Fulke Greville was exactly the same age as his cousin Philip, whom, he says in his life of him, he "observed, honoured, and loved so much; of whose youth," he writes, "I will report no other wonder but this, that though I lived with him and knew him from a child, yet I never knew him other than a man with such staidness of mind, lovely and familiar gravity, as carried grace and reverence above greater years. His talk ever of knowledge, and his very play tending to enrich his mind; so as even his teachers found something in him to observe and learn above that which they had usually read or taught. Which eminence, by nature and industry, made his worthy father style Sir Philip in my hearing (though I unseen), 'Lumen familie meæ.'" This young Warwickshire gallant, after the usual grand tour, returned to the English court to renew his friendship with Sidney, who in the mean time had narrowly escaped the bloody massacre of St. Bartholomew, and had afterwards been studying at learned Padua. But Greville, like young Norval, had heard of battles, and longed to follow to the field some warlike chief. He first tried to obtain leave to go to the Low Countries, and break a spear with Don Juan's Spanish cavaliers, and finally, in 1578, he stole away to the Netherlands, joining Secretary Walsingham, who had to try and make peace between Don John of Spain and the Prince of Orange. Elizabeth, jealous of her young men, and ever unwilling to lose their services, frowned upon him after this for several months. Again,

in 1584, the same chivalrous restlessness led Greville to agree with Sir Philip to accompany Sir Francis Drake in his last expedition but one to the "golden South Amerikies;" but here again the jealous queen laid her imperative hand on the wayward youth. Finally, when the Earl of Leicester was sent with aid to the Dutch, Greville requested leave to command a hundred horse; but the queen refusing, he resolved to entirely abandon his errant ambition, and to remain and grow where the queen, his mistress, planted him.

In 1581, he and Sir Philip were two of the chief actors in those great tilts and pageants held at Whitehall to celebrate the projected marriage of Elizabeth (then forty-nine) with the misshapen, ugly Duke of Anjou, son of Catherine de Medicis, and brother of that detestable wolf's whelp, Charles the Ninth. The duke, who had a deformed nose, was at the same time, it was rumoured, wooing the Infanta of Spain. It was of him that his sister Margaret said, "If all faithlessness were banished from the world, Anjou has enough to fill it again." A great banqueting marquee was erected at Whitehall. Master Philip Sidney (who, by-the-bye, warmly opposed the dangerous match), and his kinsmen, Master Fulke Greville, Lord Windsor, and the Earl of Arundel, were to represent the foster children of Desire, and to take by storm the Castle of Perfect Beauty, which had been erected at one end of the tilt-yard (on the site of the present Horse Guards). The challenge of these champions was delivered by a pert page, who, on the 16th of April, faced the queen without bow or reverence, as she was on her way to chapel. The great masque (no doubt written by Sidney, for the words are in his gallant high-flown manner) took place on the next day, "Whitsun Monday." Before the young horsemen came a rolling trench of canvas, painted to resemble earth, and driven forward on wheels. On the top were wooden cannons, guarded by gunners clothed in crimson sarcenet, protected by baskets filled with earth. High above all an ensign stood, displaying his blazoned flag. Within the moving redoubt were "divers kinds of most excellent music." Then followed a procession of great splendour. First rode the Earl of Arundel, in graven armour, followed by two gentlemen ushers, four pages, and twenty of his gentlemen in crimson velvet hose, yellow silk doublets, and crimson hats, fluttering with yellow feathers; six trumpeters sounded before them,

and thirty-one yeomen followed, dressed in crimson velvet cassocks, and yellow taffety doublets. After the earl came Lord Windsor, in gilt armour, his retinue of twenty-four gentlemen and sixty yeomen being resplendent in orange-tawny and black; the yeomen wearing their master's badge, a silver unicorn, on their left arms. Master Sidney's armour was half blue, half gilt, his four horses were covered with cloth of gold trappings, studded with pearls, and his yeomen wore yellow velvet, with white feathers in their caps. As for Master Fulke Greville's men, they affected loose jackets of tawny taffety, slashed and lined with yellow sarcenet, and looped and buttoned with gold.

Now, with many fantastic speeches and quaint verses, the four knights of Desire summoned the fortress of Beauty to surrender with shouts of "Alarm, alarm!" and the two cannons were then shot off, one with sweet powder, the other with sweet water. The band clashed, to represent firing, scaling ladders were applied to the walls, and flowers and love-letters were thrown into the obdurate fortress that represented old Elizabeth's heart. The defenders then descended into the tilt-yard, and broke six lances. Two of the knights clad in armour, painted with fruit, wore helmets covered with hair, to represent Adam and Eve. The next day this somewhat too prolonged spectacle continued. Desire and her four children entered, in a brave chariot, to doleful music. Her four white horses were caparisoned in white and crimson silk, and before them went a herald. The two bands fought with swords at the barriers; and the revel ended by a boy, clothed in ash-coloured robes, who, holding an olive branch, coming in, prostrated himself at the queen's feet, and tendered the submission of the dejected children of Desire, who were henceforward to be the slaves of Virtue and the Queen of the Fortress. The queen graciously gave them all great praise and thanks, and Fulke Greville and his companions then solemnly departed in the order in which they had entered. The gay show, after all, was of such stuff as dreams are made of. The detestable French duke, who arrived in November, made hot love, and was caressed and humbugged by the queen and courtiers, departed in February for Flushing. The queen certainly showed Anjou more favour than any other of her suitors, but then she was wanting the help of France against Spain. The duke died

two years after, of either poison, wine, or chagrin. Five years after the great tilt at Whitehall, Sidney fell at Zutphen. In a fog under the walls of the town his troop got entangled with the Spaniards. A musket-bullet from the trenches broke his thigh. He lingered sixteen days. His last words were :

"Love my memory, cherish my friends, but, above all, govern your will and affections by the will and word of your Creator ; in me beholding the end of this world with all her vanities." This true knight was only thirty-two when he thus died. He left to his dear friend Greville a moiety of his books. That same friend has said of him : "The greatness which he affected was built upon true worth, esteeming fame more than riches, and noble actions far above nobility itself." Spenser, who loved Sidney, in the elegiac poem, the Ruins of Time, dedicated to Sir Philip's sister, says of the patron he loved and honoured so much :

Most gentle spirit, breathed from above,
Out of the bosom of the Maker's bliss,
In whom all bounty and all virtuous love
Appeared in their native properties,
And did enrich that noble breas of this.

When Fulke Greville set his face to the sun, he turned statesman and office-holder in earnest. He was appointed treasurer of marine causes, and when a second Armada threatened, eleven years after the first, he was made rear-admiral. Horace Walpole, venting some stray temper (as such creaky old beaux sometimes unreasonably do), accuses Fulke Greville of trying to substitute Southampton (Shakespeare's friend) for Essex in Elizabeth's favour ; but, if his lordship will pardon us, this is stark nonsense, for Southampton was Essex's dearest friend ; he followed him through Temple Bar in that insane sally of February the 8th, 1601, and his head had all but rolled on Tower-hill in company with that of his friend. Fulke Greville sat frequently for Warwickshire with Sir Thomas Lucy (Shakespeare's Shallow?). King James gave him Warwick Castle, and made him Knight of the Bath. But Greville did not thrive at James's court while the perfidious Cecil lived, and he was refused documents necessary for writing the life of Queen Elizabeth. After Cecil's death, he passed again into the court sunshine, and Brooke House then flourished. Greville was soon called to the privy council and the peerage, and in 1621 was made one of the lords of the

king's bedchamber. He continued in the privy council of Charles the First, and in the beginning of the same reign founded a history lecture at Cambridge.

He was not fated to live far into Charles's reign. A sudden death and tragic end awaited the old statesman. He was now seventy-five, wise, sententious, fond, no doubt, of quoting his own tragedies, and talking of his friend Sir Philip. An old bachelor, he had young Davenant, the poet, living with him as a protégé. Known well in Holborn, he was equally honoured and loved at Whitehall. Among Lord Brooke's attendants was one morose, discontented Varney of a man, who secretly repined at having devoted the greatest part of his life to serve the old nobleman, and as yet without any special reward or mention in the will. One day, while waiting in the old man's bedroom, Heywood angrily blurted out this long concealed grievance, and asked for justice. The old noble, sententiously indignant at the manner and tone of the demand, chided the fellow roundly. In a sudden frenzy of hatred, Heywood drew his sword and stabbed his master in the back. It was a deadly wound. The murderer then ran into another room, locked the door, and threw himself on his own sword. This crime took place September the 30th, 1628, and scared London as much as the somewhat similar murder of Lord William Russell, by his Swiss valet, did in our own day. The old nobleman's corpse, lapped in lead, was taken from Brooke House to St. Mary's Church, Warwick, and there buried in the choir. On the monument was inscribed, "Fulke Greville, servant to Queen Elizabeth, counsellor to King James, and friend to Sir Philip Sidney. Trophæum Pccati." The less we say about Fulke Greville's poems the better. They are obscure and knotty (though Lamb does impute to him the fine elegiac lines on Sidney beginning, "Silence augmenteth grief"). The rest are acid as crab-apples, and quite as hard to digest. As for those wonderful black-letter tragedies, never yet acted, called Alaham and Mustapha, they are only fit to be produced in a tragedian's purgatory, with their laboured speeches, two folio pages long, their soporiferous dialogue debates, and that consummation of all puzzle-headed impracticability, the Chorus Tartarorum. Yet Leigh Hunt, if we remember right, discovers a certain dignity and grasp about these dramatic studies, and finds a charm in the prologue of Ala-

liam, spoken by the ghost of one of the wicked old kings of Ormuz, and beginning :

Thou monster horrible, under whose ugly doom
Down in Eternity's perpetual night
Man's temporal sins bear torments infinite.
For change of desolation must I come
To tempt the earth and to prophane the light.

This reads like Ben Jonson when in his gravest, as in his prologue to *Sejanus*. Greville's early sonnets, though rough and uncouth enough, are often simple, bright, and colloquial. The following is a pretty country picture of Elizabethan rustic lovers :

I with whose colours Myra drest her head,
I that wore posies of her own hand-making ;
I that my own name in the chimneys read,
By Myra finely wrought ere I was waking.
Must I look on, in hope time coming may
With change bring back my turne again to play.
I that on Sunday at the church stile found
A garland sweet, with lovers' knots in flowers,
Which I to wear about my arm was bound,
That each of us might know that all was ours.
Must I now lead an idle life in wishes.
And follow Cupid for his loaves and fishes ?

It is pleasant to find a halo thrown over this street by the thought that Shakespeare must have often come here from his noble friend's opposite, at Southampton House (now Southampton-buildings), that Sidney was no unfrequent visitor, that Camden and his grim pupil, Ben Jonson, had constant audience of Davenant's patron and Sir Philip's friend, and must have shuddered at the news of that cruel murder that autumn morning of 1628. In the account book of old Nicholas Stone (the sculptor and master-mason of Charles the First, who worked under Inigo Jones at Whitehall and St. Paul's, and executed that curious statue of Dr. Donne, the poet, which, surviving the great fire of 1666, is still preserved in St. Paul's crypt), there is a record of a dial made by him for Lord Brooke in 1622. Stone, it is worth remembering, was at this time living on the south side of Long Acre, only two doors from a certain not altogether unknown Huntingdonshire captain, one Oliver Cromwell, and there he lived for six years—from 1637 to 1643.

But there was another poet, the memory of whom still more consecrates this obscure Holborn street, a poet whose end was more tragic than that of the old privy councillor, a poet whose genius was of a high class. In a dismal garret of No. 39, now a small grocer's, a few years ago a coffee-shop, before that a plumber's, that wonderful and unhappy boy, Chatterton, not yet eighteen, killed himself on the 24th of August, 1770. Chatterton was the son of

a clever, dissipated man, who had been sub-chantor at Bristol Cathedral, and master of a small free school in Pipe-street, Bristol ; his uncle was sexton of Redcliffe Church. The father died before the poet was born. The child, from an early age, displayed the marked sensitiveness of genius, and evinced a thirst for fame ; at only five years old, being asked what device he should like on a mug a friend of his mother's was about to give him, he answered, like a young Alexander :

"Paint me an angel with wings, and a trumpet that will trumpet my name over the world."

Being taught to read from an old illuminated manuscript, and a black letter Bible, his mind was directed, even at seven, to mediæval books. At eleven he wrote a short satire on a religious hypocrite. Soon after, he produced a sort of Ode to the Deity, superior to Pope's verses at twelve, or Cowley's at fifteen. The poem begins :

Almighty Framer of the skies,
O let our pure devotion rise
Like incense in thy sight ;
Wrapt in impenetrable shade
Thb texture of our souls was made,
Till thy command gave light.

A neglected parcel of old mediæval manuscripts, found in a ransacked chest in a room over the north porch of Redcliffe Church, and which was supposed to have belonged to William Canynge, a merchant of Bristol, in the reign of Edward the Fourth, seems to have led his mind to those forgeries which brought him fame and misery, immortality and death. He was only fourteen when he began these extraordinary deceptions by writing an imaginary pedigree of the family of Mr. Burgum, a pewterer, who had been kind to him. In 1767 Chatterton was bound apprentice to an attorney, and began to forge mediæval narratives of local events, beginning by a spurious account of the opening of Bristol Bridge, inserted in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal in 1768. He was then only sixteen. He gradually pushed on his mines, and won fresh dupes. To a Bristol historian he supplied historical fragments, with a tragedy which he called *Ella*, and fathered on Rowley, an imaginary priest of the reign of Henry the Sixth. Last of all, he flew at higher fame, and boldly volunteered to send Horace Walpole, for his *Anecdotes of Painting*, a treatise on English painting, supposed to be written by Rowley for Master Canynge. Walpole at once submitted the verses to his more experienced friends, Gray and Mason, who pronounced them palpable forgeries. Wal-

pole then returned the verses, recommending Chatterton to keep to his profession, in duty and gratitude to his widowed mother. Chatterton unjustly attributed the rejection to the disclosure he had made of his poverty to a mean man of rank. Agonised at this failure, "the mad genius," as his Bristol friends called him, threatened suicide, and drew up a reckless will, which so frightened his master that he at once cancelled the lad's indentures. At this catastrophe Chatterton wrote to a friend:

"No, it is my pride, my damned native unconquerable pride, that plunges me into distraction. You must know that nineteenth-twentieths of my composition is pride. I must either live a slave, a servant, have no will of my own, no sentiments of my own which I may freely declare as such, or die. Perplexing alternative. But it distracts me to think of it."

The lad's resolve was soon made: he would go to London. "A literary life," he wrote to a friend. "If that fail I will turn Methodist preacher. A new sect may easily be devised; but if that, too, shall fail me, my last and final resource is a pistol." He left Bristol in high spirits in the London coach, April the 26th, 1770. The city, paved with gold, lay all before him. The magazines are eager for the new poet. Wilkes hears of him. He becomes known to all the geniuses at the Chapter Coffee House. He almost gets appointed tutor to the young Duke of Northumberland, only he knows no foreign language. A music-seller in the City meets him in the pit of Drury-lane Theatre, and asks him to write songs for Ranelagh. He becomes intoxicated. He affects fashionable airs, and writes patronising letters to astonish his humble friends at home. He is introduced to Beckford, the audacious lord mayor, who dared to beard George the Third, and expects to get much work in lampooning. He sends his mother a French snuff-box, his sister two fans, and some herb tobacco for his grandmother. But this was all pretence; he was at this very time really all but starving, too proud to own it, and too deep in despair to avow the truth even to himself.

Beckford had died suddenly from a fit produced by over-exertion; the poet's editors were in prison. By four months' brain labour he had earned only four pounds, fifteen shillings, and ninepence. The needy publishers owed him ten pounds, nineteen shillings, and sixpence. In July he removed from a friend's in Shoreditch to

No. 39, Brooke-street, the house of Mrs. Angell, a sack-maker (mantua-maker). He asked the Bristol historian, Barrett, to give him a certificate so that he might go to Africa as a surgeon's mate. Barrett conscientiously refused. The poor lad was starving fast, but would not own it. For two days he brooded in his room, ate nothing, and was angry when kind Mrs. Angell asked him to take a little dinner with her. That night he bought some arsenic, and drank it in water. When his door was broken open he was found dead, the floor strewn with little scraps of paper. An inquest was held on the body, which was carelessly interred, without knell, prayer, or tear, in the dismal burying-ground of Shoe-lane workhouse (the site of the present Farringdon Market). A doubtful Bristol legend asserts that, by a friend's kindness, the body was sent down by a carrier's cart to his mother, and buried on the right-hand side of the lime-tree middle paved walk of Redcliffe churchyard, within the shadow of the old north porch, where he had spent so many happy hours.

Many months after this tragedy, Horace Walpole, gay, fashionable, and fresh from France, was dining at the Royal Academy, when Doctor Goldsmith drew the attention of the company to an account of a marvellous discovery of ancient poems at Bristol, for which he was laughed at by Doctor Johnson, who was present. Walpole, finding the poems were Chatterton's, told Goldsmith that, if he had pleased, he could have had the honour of ushering that great discovery to the presence of the learned world; "but though Goldsmith's credulity diverted me," writes Walpole, "my mirth was soon dashed, for, on asking about Chatterton, he told me he had been in London, and had destroyed himself. I heartily wished then I had been the dupe of all the poor young man had written to me . . . a poor young man, not eighteen, and of most miraculous talents."

In Fox-court, Brooke-street, a miserable alley leading into Gray's-inn-road, was born, January the 16th, 1696, that most unhappy man, Richard Savage, the poet. Really (as Mr. Moy Thomas has proved, with great subtlety and ingenuity) the son of a cobbler, Savage claimed to be the illegitimate child of the infamous Countess of Macclesfield, by her worthless lover, Lord Rivers. The wretched woman openly acknowledged her shame in order to obtain a divorce from her husband, and a child was born after

their separation. She was secretly brought to Fox-court, and wore a mask while she was delivered, but that child, it has been proved, died soon after its christening at St. Andrew's. Lady Mason, Savage's supposed maternal grandmother, sent him to a grammar-school at St. Albans. When about eighteen, his supposed mother dying, Savage found letters among her papers disclosing, as he said, and perhaps believed, his real descent; but there is no doubt that if such papers ever existed at all, they referred to the dead illegitimate child. This lit up his ambition; he wrote a satire on Hogarth's friend, the worthy Bishop Hoadley, frequented the theatres, wrote a tragedy, and became acquainted with Steele. Already wild and reckless, in a drunken night brawl he killed a Mr. Sinclair at a tavern near Charing-cross, and was with difficulty saved from the hangman. Threatening to lampoon his supposed mother, who repudiated him, the poet was at last bought off by a pension from Lord Tyrconnel. This he soon forfeited by what Boswell justly calls his "indecorous pride, meanness, and ferocity." Calling himself the Volunteer Laureate, much to Colley Cibber's annoyance, the hopeless man extorted a pension from Queen Caroline, who had before procured his pardon. Idle, drunken, debauched, Savage sank into miserable poverty, when in 1737 the queen died, and his small pension of fifty pounds a year ceased. It was at this time that Johnson (only one year in London) knew him, and describes himself and Savage, both poor, wandering all night round St. James's-square for want of a night's lodging, loudly patriotic, denouncing the ministers, and vowing that, whatever happened, they would stand by their country.

Savage was already known for his powerful poem of the Wanderer, an imitation of the Seasons, and that shameless denunciation of his supposed mother in the Bastard. Pope, Thomson, and other friends, now raised a small amount for the clever scoundrel, on condition he should fly the (to him) irresistible temptation of London, and go and live in Wales. He consented, but coming up to town, against his friends' wishes, to produce a tragedy, he halted at Bristol, and there feasted among the kindly merchants, proud of such a guest. All these friends he offended by his debauchery, violence, and ingratitude. One by one they deserted him; still he lingered in the city, drinking and revelling, till at last thrown into prison for a small coffee-

house debt, he died in jail, aged forty-six, of a fever caught after six months' imprisonment, and was buried in St. Peter's churchyard, at the turnkey's expense. Savage's own lines in the Bastard, on his fatal duel, furnish the best comment on his wasted life.

He might have lived till folly died in shame,
Till kindling wisdom felt a thirst for fame.
He might perhaps his country's friend have proved,
Both happy, generous, candid, and beloved.

In Charles the Second's time, Brooke House was called Warwick House, and there sat the inquisitive and troublesome Committee, which met to inquire into the way all the money raised for the Dutch War had really gone. Pepys describes going to Warwick House, March the 3rd, 1660, to see his great patron the Earl of Sandwich, who was dining there with Lord Manchester, Sir Dudley North, Lord Fiennes, and Lord Berkeley.

The Earl of Clare moved to Warwick House from Drury-lane before 1683. We have this fact accurately fixed by a touching incident which Bishop Burnet relates in his account of the execution of that worthy nobleman, Lord William Russell, for his share in the Rye House Plot, July the 21st, 1683. The conspiracy (two years before the death of Charles the Second) seems to have been compounded of plot within plot. There was no proof, however, that Russell knew anything of the plans to assassinate Charles and his mischievous brother at Rye House Farm on their way from Newmarket to London. Lord William came in his coach, with Tillotson and Burnet, to the scaffold ready in Lincoln's-inn-fields. As they passed Warwick House, observing all the windows shut, he asked Burnet if my Lord Clare was out of town. Burnet replied that surely no windows there would be open on that occasion. As Russell passed Southampton House (Southampton-buildings), where he had wooed his wife, the earl's daughter, he showed a natural emotion, though his courage never gave way.

It was in Brooke-street that that wise and good man, Lord Chancellor Hardwicke (1690—1764), the son of a Dover attorney, was articulated, without a fee, to Mr. Salkeld, an attorney residing there. Salkeld's thrifty wife hurt the pride of the clever young articulated clerk by frequently sending him out on petty errands. He at last cured the lady of this by charging her one shilling and sixpence for a cauliflower he had been told to buy—six-

pence for the cauliflower and one shilling for a sedan-chair to bring it home in. Hardwicke went up the ladder bravely. In 1714 he was called to the bar, in 1720 he was solicitor-general, in 1733 chief justice of the King's Bench, in 1737 lord chancellor. Burke and Wilkes both praised him, and of this great lawyer, Lord Mansfield once said to Ruffhead, Pope's dull biographer:

"If you wish to write the life of a truly great man, write the life of Lord Hardwicke, who from very humble means, and without family support and connexions, became lord high chancellor of England, on account of his virtue, his talents, and his diligence."

It was in low beer-shops round Brookstreet that the Cato-street Conspiracy of 1820 was concocted. The weavers of this plot were Thistlewood, a broken-down gambler and ex-subaltern in the marines, who lived in Stanhope-street, Clare Market; Brunt, a boot-closer in Fox-court, Brooke-street; Keys, a pork butcher, of the same dismal locality; Davidson, a man of colour, and a cabinet-maker; Tidd, a labourer, who lived at No. 5, in Hole-in-the-Wall-passage, Brooke's Market, where the conspirators' arms and powder were kept, and Harrison, a discharged Life Guardsman. The meetings were generally at Brunt's, and there it was arranged to kill Wellington, Canning, Eldon, and the other cabinet ministers, at a dinner to be given on February the 23rd, 1820, by Lord Harrowby, at his house, No. 39, Grosvenor-square.

Thus much, and no more, relating to the street of the three poets history has handed down.

But in this mortal struggle
I stand—poor speck of dust,
Defiant—self-reliant
To die—if die I must!

A DAY DREAM OF THE EARTH.

OUR mother earth, the bounteous, the beautiful, the prolific! Is she conscious of her existence? And is she subject to pleasure and to pain—to growth, maturity, and decay—like all the other living creatures that are born and nurtured on her breast? I have a dream, which may not "be all a dream," that not only this teeming mother of animal and vegetable life, but her spouse and lord, the sun, and all the countless worlds that disclose themselves to our eyes when night removes the veil of too much light that concealed them, are conscious beings, who, in the words of Addison,

Utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine.

It is likely that the ultra-mathematical folk, who believe nothing that is not as provable as the multiplication table, may laugh this vision to scorn, if such rigid people ever laugh at all; but what then? Denial proves nothing, and there are more things in heaven and earth than mathematicians can explain. Denial is often much more rash than assertion. Suppose a little, infinitesimal animalcule, sporting in a drop of water, were to take it upon its small self to deny the existence of this earth because its eyes could not discover, nor its countenance touch it? What an ineffably stupid and conceited little animalcule it would be! And suppose, coming to larger creatures, distinctly visible to the unassisted eye, the unclean parasite that dwells in the hair or on the skin of animals, were endowed with speech and a glimmer of reason, and were to declare that the tangled forests and mazy wildernesses of fur and peltry amid which he crawled were the vegetable growth of the world on which he lived and moved and had his being, and that the world aforesaid on which these forests grew for his use and habitation was an inanimate mass, what a crass, conceited, abominable little insect he would be! And have we who inhabit this magnificent earth any more reason to deny its consciousness of life, or its possession of an animating spirit than the little creatures alluded to would have to deny the consciousness and the soul of man? It is only man's ignorant pride

THE DEATH STRUGGLE.

My back is to the wall,
And my face is to my foes,
That surge and gather round me
Like waves when winter blows.
The ghosts of bygone errors,
The faults of former years,
That sting my veins like arrows,
And pierce my heart like spears.

But let them do their utmost,
For these I can endure
And meet and overcome them
By suffering made pure.
Against all other foemen
I'll fight with fiery breath,
And if, all done, I'm vanquished,
Go gloriously to death.

My back is to the wall,
And my face is to my foes,
I've lived a life of combat,
And borne what no one knows.

which leads him to imagine that he is the paragon of nature, and the monopolist even of the countless orbs of heaven, which he is too apt to assume were solely created to flash their light upon his eyes, when the revolution of his own globe deprives him of the sunshine.

Dallying with the belief that the earth lives as well as moves, I take a pleasure in picturing to myself how she passes her time, and in what manner she enjoys herself. In the first place she creates time. Time is her work. It is only her revolutions upon her axis—in her majestic course around the sun—that causes time to be a measure of duration, to be understood of men. To the earth herself there is no time. She rolls through eternity. And how does she employ the eternity in which her lot is cast? Not only in hymning, as Addison sings, the glory of her Almighty Creator, but, we may well suppose, in intellectual intercourse with her sister planets. We poor dwellers on her surface can manage, by means of the electricity of which we have discovered part of the uses and the secrets, to send a message round her whole girth with a rapidity exceeding that of time; and may not she, by means of the same subtle agency, converse with her fellow-travellers through the appointed pathways of infinity as easily as man talks with man? And the Aurora Borealis—the northern lights or streamers, that dart their lovely flashes from the pole—may they not be, in spite of any denial that Mr. Practical, Mr. Prosaic, or Mr. Matter-of-Fact may hurl against the supposition, be the signals by which she speaks to distant orbs, and answers their questions about the state of mankind, whether the race has or has not grown wiser than of old, turned the sword into the ploughshare, the spear into the pruning-hook, learned to love each other, and abandoned the infernal study of war and slaughter! Perhaps, too, our mother earth may learn from them that the golden era, the age of peace, the paradise of love and true religion, has, after much struggle and suffering, been finally established in their happier spheres; and mother earth, with a radiant smile, and possibly a sigh, may say that “for me, too, this divine consummation shall arrive in God’s good time,” nay more, that it visibly approaches, and may be seen afar off by the eyes of this yearning mother, though invisible to human ken.

This is one of my day dreams of the

earth. I take a pleasure in believing that her maternity is a source of joy to her, as it is to other animated and intelligent beings, and that the efforts which she makes in spring, when she gives birth to the flowers, and clothes the trees with leaves and blossoms, and which she continues through the summer and the autumn till the ripening of the fruits and the harvests, are efforts attended with as much pure joy and emotion as the maternity of human mothers, who bless God for the lovely gifts of children, and take unselfish pleasure in their growth and training. I dream that when the sun shines upon her in all his midsummer splendour, she may be as happy as a bride is in the presence of him she loves. Were the earth sterile she would be unhappy. Being fruitful, she must, of necessity, be glad; perhaps so glad that the wilfulness and perversity of her favourite and most beautiful child—man—may be the only trouble and sorrow she has to endure.

There are facts in the physical nature and history of the earth which we who dwell in her bosom have but recently begun to study and to understand, and which go to prove that her life, whatever it may be, is not one of monotony. She has gone through, and may yet go through, many crises, some of them violent, and some of them peaceable. Geology tells us of upheavals and subsidencies on her surface, of the action of fire, frost, and water upon what, as we know so little of her interior, we must call her skin or crust, and we may believe that as she is subject to pleasure she is also subject to pain, and to discipline, and that these convulsions, sent to her for a beneficial purpose—like the sorrows and calamities of mankind—may not have been unattended with suffering. We have all of us heard of the Golden Age, and of the youth of the world, even if we have not been nurtured upon the Greek and Roman classics, or read Mr. Gladstone’s *Juventus Mundi*; but science, that lifts occasionally a corner of the veil that hides from us the mysteries of nature, gives us unmistakable hints that the earth, however old she may be in years, is still young in epochs, and that possibly, by some mysterious means, or the operation of the mighty solar agencies of electricity and magnetism, she may periodically renew her forces, and go back again into adolescence. The author of a volume entitled the *Miseries and Liabilities of the Present Life*, declares the earth to be growing decrepit.

"The earth," he says, "gives signs of age, disease, and fickleness. It yields its increase grudgingly, and demands an exorbitant fee beforehand in toil and sweat from the husbandman. It has ill turns or paroxysms, when it rouses the ocean into tempests, and makes sport of navies, strewing the shores with the wrecks and with the carcasses of men. It rocks a continent, or sinks an island, shattering massive cities into countless fragments, and burying the wretched inhabitants in indiscriminate ruin. Anon it writhes and groans in mortal agony, and finds relief only by disgorging its fiery bowels, burying cities and villages in burning graves. The earth is old and feeble, and must needs groan on until it renews its prime." These paroxysms in mother earth, of which this quaint author writes so dolefully, may be nothing more than the natural movement of the magnificent creature in the full healthiness of her youth and vigour, which may only appear irregular and violent to us, because we do not understand either their causes or their periods. Even deluges—of which there appear to have been many, in addition to the great deluge recorded in Scripture—may all occur in the natural and beneficial course of the earth's existence and development.

There was a time, according to the earliest traditions and mythological legends of the most ancient nations (and the idea is strengthened, if not positively confirmed, by the researches and inductions of modern science), when the earth rolled around the sun, on the plane of the equator, and not, as now, on that of the ecliptic, and when, consequently, the days and nights were always equal on every part of the globe, and sunrise and sunset knew no variation. The ecliptic or zodiac marks now, with the plane of the equator, an angle of twenty-three degrees twenty-seven minutes thirty-five seconds. Supposing the earth, as ancient legends tell us, and as science admits is probable, to have once revolved on the plane of the equator, did she start suddenly on her present path of more than twenty-three degrees of obliquity, or did she incline to her new course by slow and imperceptible degrees through hundreds of thousands or millions of ages? Modern science cannot tell us authoritatively. It tells us, however, as one of its latest calculations and deductions, from long-continued study of the heavens, that a clearly ascertainable diminution of the obliquity of the earth's orbit and approach to the old, and possibly original, equatorial line

has taken place within the historical period, and that the ecliptic is slowly receding towards the equator. Mr. Robert Grant, the well-known professor of astronomy at the University of Glasgow, tells us that here "an interesting question arises. Will the obliquity continually diminish until the equator and the ecliptic coincide? If this should happen, the sun will daily attain the same meridian altitude as at the equinoxes, and an eternal spring will reign over the whole earth. Lagrange first showed that such a condition cannot possibly exist, the mutual action of the planets occasioning only small oscillations in the position of their orbits. The ecliptic will therefore continue to approach the equator until it reach the limit assigned by the action of the perturbing forces, after which it will gradually recede from that plane, according to the same law as that which determined its previous approach." Colonel Drayson, of the Royal Artillery, at a recent meeting of the Royal Society, read a paper on this subject, in which he stated, as the result of patient study, observation, and calculation, that "the pole of the earth traced a curve in the heavens, which was a circle round a point six degrees from the pole of the ecliptic, and that this curve gave an obliquity of upwards of thirty-five degrees for the date thirteen thousand years before the Christian era." If this could be accepted as absolutely true, it would follow that in about fourteen thousand eight hundred and seventy-one years the plane of the ecliptic had approached about twelve degrees nearer to the equator. Colonel Drayson, like Mr. Grant and other astronomers, though he has started a theory which does not seem to be altogether accepted by his fellow-labourers in the study of the stars, is of opinion that these changes are only progressive up to a certain point, and that the oscillation, having reached its limit, retraces its course to its starting point, and that the complete period of what he calls this conical movement is accomplished in twenty-five thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight years. Far be it from me to contradict an astronomer in his own science, but if these learned men may calculate, it may be allowed to an unlearned man—unlearned in these matters—to dream. And I dream accordingly. Shakespeare dreamed of the electric telegraph, or something very like it, when he made the delicate Ariel girdle the earth in forty seconds; and Coleridge, in the *Ancient Mariner*, distinctly dreamed and predicted the pneu-

matic railway. And my dream, though science may not accept it, may, like the nod of Lord Burleigh's head, have something in it. Meditating sometimes on the possible history and biography, so to speak, of our mother earth, I have thought that this theory of oscillation, of swinging and balancing to and fro, might possibly not be correct, except in the little space that man can count, and that in the great eternity of the earth's onward career, since the dawn of creation, there has been no retrogression in the mighty precession of the equinox; that the earth originally started on the plane of the equator, and that the obliquity of the ecliptic increased slowly, surely, for ever and for ever, until, in due course, the path of the ecliptic lay right across the pole, so that the pole and the equator changed places; that the precession still continued until, perhaps, in millions of years, every part of the earth's surface, in its turn, became tropical, temperate, and polar, and exhibited itself to the sun, so as at one time to receive the extremest heat, and at another to be subjected to the extremest cold; that in this stupendous march the alterations of the sea levels overwhelmed islands and continents, and caused other continents and islands, once at the bottom of the ocean, to be left dry by the receding waters, and that this process still endured, and will endure, until the earth herself shall be no more, if such a consummation is ever to be arrived at. As has been said or sung by Dynamene, the sea nymph, in *Studies from the Antique*:

Not even lift the perishable hills
Their cloven summits to the moon,
Not even run the mountain rills
The self-same course, and sing the same glad tune
Not even sleeps the unprolific pole
In chains of adamant ice,
Not even through their groves of spice
And tangled woods, the tropics' rivers roll.
For Fate is just, and every rood of earth,
In all her amplitude of girth,
Hath its appointed course beneath the sun,
And passes northwards as the Aeons run.

There are many well-known facts—no otherwise susceptible of explanation—with which this theory would correspond. How came the bones of elephants, tigers, and such animals as can only exist in tropical regions, to be found at the verge of the pole, at Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla? How came the Caspian and the Dead Sea to be filled with the waters of the ocean? How came the glaciers to flow down the sides of Ben Lomond and other hills of the Scottish Highlands, leaving their marks

behind them, to be seen of men to this day? And was it not an irruption of the Atlantic Ocean through the Straits of Gibraltar, consequent upon the change of level of sea and land, that deluged the low-lying country that then united Europe and Africa, and formed the sea that is now the Mediterranean? And is not the Baltic Sea gradually becoming shallower, even in the observation of living men? How can we account for the fact that deep under the bogs and morasses of the outer Hebrides, where not even a bush will grow except it be sheltered from the winds, there are to be found the blackened and prostrate trunks of gigantic oaks and other trees? And how can we account for the existence of coal—not only under the surface of the earth, but under the waters of the sea? The traveller who walks along the high northern bank of the great river Niagara, between the Falls and the entrance of the stream into Lake Ontario, will see, on a level with Lake Erie, and about a hundred and sixty feet above the level of the magnificent waters that rush and foam into the lower level of Ontario, large beds of fossilised oysters, covering thousands of acres, a fact suggestive of the time when the ocean extended as far as Lake Erie, when the Falls of Niagara were not in existence, and when these oyster beds were on the margin of the Atlantic, that then stretched as far inland as Lake Erie, and when the lower portions of Canada only existed as an archipelago, and when the range of the Laurentian mountains formed the eastern boundary of the North American continent. These are but random selections from many facts, all tending to prove that what is now dry land, may once, if not many times, have been covered by the sea; and that what is now sea may once have been islands and continents, peopled perhaps as thickly as our old Europe, or as older Asia. Carrying out this day dream of the earth to its logical conclusion, and remembering the Mosaic record of the submergement of all the then known world in the time of Noah, with all the temples, towers, cities, arts, and sciences of the people who then lived, may it not be asked, whether at the bottom of the deep Atlantic, or the Pacific, there may not now exist the ruins of past empires and kingdoms, and of past civilisations, perhaps in their day as highly advanced as our own, possessing printing presses, and railways, and gas, and the electric telegraph, all those great achievements of the

human mind, of which we are apt to boast as exclusively our own?

Not ever trod men's feet the soil of Rome.
Long ere its name was breathed of mortal lips,
The sea washed over it in stormy foam;
And where the Atlantic whirls the laden ships
Great rivers ran, and gorgeous cities stood
Upon the margin of the flood.
And where to-day the fishes spawn,
Ten times ten thousand years ago
Contending hosts for battle drawn,
Made crimson with their blood the winter snow,
And were as mad in their appointed hour
As fools of yesterday, that rage and bleed,
And slay their fellow fools for greed
Of wicked and insatiable power.

So sings my favourite sea nymph, Dynamene, and so has run my day dream many a time and oft, when, poring over the pages of the geologists and the astronomers, I have thought their theories prosaic and dry, as well as insufficient, and longed to oppose a little imagination to their learning, and escape for awhile from the slavery of the actual to the blue empyrean of the possible, and revel like a bird uncaged in the infinite freedom of the sunshine and the starlight. And why not, dear reader? The dreams of night and sleep, though they sometimes give us pleasure, are not under our own control. The dreams of daylight and of waking have a double advantage. We may shape them to our will, and so take care that they shall always, however otherwise useless they may be, administer to our own gratification.

"SHUTTERS."

It is often difficult to distinguish a technical term from a slang word. Our language, in common with our army, is constantly obtaining recruits from the lowest classes. These remain apart for awhile under probation, as it were, and forming a sort of linguistic awkward squad; but by-and-bye passing examination and satisfying the authorities as to their worth and utility, they are duly enrolled in the dictionaries of our tongue. After many years of active service certain words are pensioned off, so to speak, as obsolete; they retire into the poor-houses and hospitals of speech, and though occasionally recurred to by philological and antiquarian students, they are for the most part permitted to expire peacefully of inanition, neglect, and old age. At best they can be regarded but as reserve forces, only to be called into the field upon some occasion of so extreme a nature as to be barely conceivable. Meanwhile, their places are filled by young

and fresh words which come into being unaccountably enough, one hardly knows how, or when, or why. Some are no doubt supplied by science, and result of necessity from the changes and discoveries attending upon the progress of civilisation; others, and perhaps these are the majority, are picked up in the streets, are "gutter children," into whose origin it is vain to inquire. Thus, when a new word forces itself upon our attention, we may well hesitate as to the kind of reception we should accord to it. Ought we, as a matter of course, to give it forthwith the welcome that is proverbially due to a stranger? Or should we rather view it as a suspicious coin issued by an illicit mint, and without real title to a place in the currency of the realm?

These comments and inquiries arise out of a brief conversation I lately enjoyed with my friend Float. I should explain that my friend Float is a theatrical man. Not that he has any sort of professional connexion with the drama. He is not a manager, an actor, a scene-painter, or even shifter; he is not a costumier, a check-taker, a dramatic author, or even critic. He derives from quite other and far removed pursuits the means whereby he lives. Still he is theatrical—deeply and intensely so. Nor does he stand alone in this respect. Just as there are furious politicians, who have no sort of share or hope of share in government and legislation, who possibly are not even registered electors, but who, nevertheless, devote themselves to the affairs of the State, and discuss vehemently, and watch over incessantly, the national interests both at home and abroad, so are there men to whom the theatre need be nothing and yet would seem to be all in all; who are more Thespian than the Thespians themselves, and who move, and breathe in, and carry about with them everywhere a dramatic atmosphere. Float is of this class. He is absorbed in the stage, its professors, and proceedings. The production of a new pantomime is more to him than the fall of an empire; the failure of a play of greater moment than the deaths of kings. Play-bills and placards are to him what books and newspapers are to other readers: his literature, his study, and his joy. And certainly he is informed to erudition on the subject of his choice. Nothing escapes him. He descends to esoteric depths in his researches. The current gossip of the green-rooms he knows of course: the plans of this manager, the mistakes of that, the pro-

spects of the other: what novelties are in preparation, and what changes are impending in particular dramatic establishments: why, of specified transactions, this had failed and that had prospered. But his information is far more subtle and extensive than this. I despair of conveying an idea of it without occupying more space than seems expedient. Let me by means of an instance attempt to do justice to Float in this respect. He knew such things as the maiden name of the aunt of the pantaloon of the Royal Octagon Theatre—an establishment of inferior rank situate in Lambeth—the church at which she had been baptised, the number of times she had suffered from toothache, and the precise amount at her credit in the savings' bank of her parish exactly six weeks before her demise. And this, be it understood, was not a merely fortuitous scrap of learning. His mind and memory are stuffed full of similar valuable and curious matters. I trust I have now made it clear that Float is really a very theatrical man.

Meeting Float, it was of course necessary to talk theatrically. He permits, indeed, conversation of no other kind. If you venture upon another topic he adroitly takes it in hand, and soon turns it to dramatic account, and slides into the grooves of the stage. So I said—for I hate to run counter to my friends' inclinations—I much prefer, if only for the sake of my own greater ease and tranquillity to give their hobbies a good start and a fair field—I said, "I see the Hexagon Theatre is going to open with a new company." Float, who is so far himself an actor that he conveys a great deal of meaning by means of shrugs, winks, nods, and gestures, replied simply, "Shutters!" accompanying the utterance with a peculiar facial expression and an air of strange significance. I at once gathered that he thought indifferently of the company, and of the concerns generally, of the Hexagon Theatre.

"Shutters!" The word was new to me. Was it, to revert to my preliminary notes, technical or slang? Was it, in the only sense in which he could be understood to employ it, a recognised member of the family of English words? I was perplexed. It was no doubt depreciatory. It purported disparagement of the Hexagon company. Still I was not clear about it. With certain terms of Parisian argot—applicable to unskilled or hapless players—such as *tombeurs*, *galettes*, *croûtons*, I happened to be acquainted. But—"shutters?" I was not clear about it.

Naturally I turned to the play-bill of the Hexagon which announced the list of the members of the dramatic troupe. Possibly I might thence derive explanation and intelligence. I speedily noted among the personages engaged the familiar names of the actors, Wraith and Double, and the actresses, Miss Banshee and Mrs. Fetch—to mention no more. I perceived also that the musical arrangements of the theatre were to be under the control of Herr Doppelgänger.

It then occurred to me that these players had very frequently been connected with disastrous enterprises, with temporary managements and dog-day campaigns at the theatres, when the population of the stage and the orchestra has been sometimes known to exceed in number the visitors to the pit and boxes. Had this fact—probably not solely attributable to any great fault on the part of the performers themselves—led to their engagement being superstitiously regarded by Float as inevitably ominous of impending misfortune, of the bankruptcy of their manager, and the closing of his theatre? Were they "shutters" in that they were suggestive and significant of shutting up? It really seemed that Float's expression could only so be explained.

They were not players of any great distinction certainly. With Wraith as a public performer I was well acquainted. He was not a good actor; but still that was not a convincing reason why he should not have prospered in his profession. He had been many years on the stage; a small, spare man, with a dingy, wrinkled face, and a husky, snuffy, bass voice, and was well versed in the business and traditions of his art. In this respect he possessed much information, which did not prevent him, however, from being, generally regarded, rather a dull and depressing person. He played tyrannical kings and inflexible fathers as a rule, but misfortune often interfered with his predilections, and reduced him to accept any kind of character with which managers could be induced to intrust him. Still he was prepared to "go on," as he phrased it, with alacrity, and at a moment's notice, as the representative of such parts as King Claudius, Friar Lawrence, Brabantio, and the Ghost of Hamlet's Father. Unhappily for Wraith, however, the demand for his portrayal of these famous personages could never be described as at all lively. I remember it used to be told of this actor that once, when an ambitious

amateur had taken a theatre for the express purpose of startling, or, let us say, rather shocking the town with his notion of the character of Hamlet, Wraith had been invited to appear as the Ghost. But a difficulty arose on the question of terms. The veteran player had appraised his services very modestly. He had required a salary of three pounds or so per week. The ambitious amateur—who, by the way, held his own exertions to be quite beyond price (they were much more cheaply valued by everybody else)—regarded Wraith's demand as exorbitant. "Tell him," he said to the agent intrusted with the negotiation, "that I can get any number of Ghosts for thirty shillings."

Wraith turned away; he declined to listen to such a communication. "No, sir," he said, simply, with moist eyes, "not Shakespeare at thirty shillings a week. I can't do it, sir."

Poor fellow! He was much pinched at the time. There was little in his pockets but pawn-tickets, and his conspicuous display of rusty black satin stock suggested cruel deficiency in the matter of his body linen. No doubt in this instance he was completely clad and kept sufficiently warm altogether by his pride. He was foolish, no doubt; still his folly had its heroic element. At the same time, the distinctions he insisted upon were not very easily to be comprehended. For I have known him reduced to somewhat ignoble histrionic occupation. Once I heard, issuing from the pasteboard cavern of a pantomime mask, a solemn voice, enunciated with the severe staccato method of tragic elocution. There could be no mistake about those tones. Wraith was playing the King of the Blue Devils, or some such potentate of the Christmas drama. To be sure he made no attempt to divert his audience by affecting comicality. So far he revenged himself upon Fate and his part. And probably he reasoned that the humiliation of his task was fairly compensated by the amount of his salary, whereas his playing the Ghost for thirty shillings a week involved quite unremunerative discredit, brought down the market price of the character, and in some way conveyed a slight to Shakespeare, to whose works and memory he professed great devotion. The former was a personal, the latter a professional, degradation. The argument is not very clear, but when sentiment invades a question, logic, of course, is put to flight.

I have said he was not a good actor, and

now it seemed that Float had classed him among "shutters." Perhaps he played best off the stage. He represented to perfection an actor out of an engagement. Only, those who did not know him would urge that then he was not in truth acting at all, but was simply himself. He made a great deal of the part of Wraith, however. He walked down Bow-street, let us say, with the air of one "taking the stage." He was then a sort of Timon in modern dress of threadbare quality. He delivered asides to passers-by, his acquaintances, in a masterly way. He indulged in amazingly ironic smiles and sinister scowls. By the art of his delivery his most ordinary observations acquired a curious kind of blank verse flavour. A portentous system of gesticulation accompanied his every utterance. If he but designed to convey his opinion that a change in the wind might possibly be looked for very shortly, he would yet speak with half-closed eyes, opening them at the close of his sentence with as bright a flash as those not very lambent orbs could effect, and he would the while lay a gaunt forefinger against the side of his prominent nose—an act that, upon the stage, has always been held to imply the communication of something subtle and momentous. In this way he imparted something of the elevation, or perhaps I should rather say the weight of tragedy, to the most trivial phrases. His napless hat was tilted forward with an inclination to one side, so that his left eye was always shaded by the brim, and thus sheltered was permitted to roll and glare very freely indeed. Two scanty tufts of iron-grey hair were carefully brushed over his temples towards his cheek bones, perhaps to conceal the many deep wrinkles that had there congregated. Poor Wraith! I fear that he was too often cast for this part of an actor out of an engagement. Yet though he was by no means of cheerful or genial disposition, and was apt to view the world about him and its present condition rather acridly, he was rarely desponding. He derived solace from very small matters. "The pit rose at me at Wakefield!" he would sometimes say with an air of triumph that had yet something severe about it. He did not think it necessary to explain that there were very few persons indeed in the pit at the time, and that some of these, so at least Wraith's enemies were wont to allege, had risen to go away. Indeed, the season at Wakefield had lasted little more than a week, and,

commercially viewed, had been very disastrous to all concerned. Happily, perhaps, he never knew that he was ranked among "shutters" by Float and such as Float. Wraith was proud of his engagement at the Hexagon, and thoroughly believed in the enterprise.

"We shall do great things there," he said, significantly. "At last I shall make my mark upon the town."

But then he had invariably ventured upon similar prognostications relative to all his previous engagements, which certainly had not turned out particularly well.

Wraith was a thoroughly well-conducted, respectable, and sober man, whereas I think Double was dissipated and drank. Double was a light comedian, and, no doubt, his age and corpulence considered, he was surprisingly light. But then lightness and unwieldiness may be seen in combination, as a balloon will testify. And there was much of the balloon about Double's contour. He was really a dreadful performer, yet he often won applause, I noticed. His old stage tricks, his conventional friskiness of demeanour, his obsolete gaiety of costume, the flaxen wigs that crowned his bald old pate, his noisy, artificial laugh, his wheezy, falsetto tones, the hard creases in his pasty, fleshy, full-moon face, still had charms for some of his audience, I suppose. Yet they soon wearied of him probably, for he was one of Float's "shutters," although certainly he had managed to live long upon very short engagements.

Of the ladies, I need only say that Mrs. Fetch was a commonplace but quite inoffensive representative of the elderly dames of the theatre, and that Miss Banshee (whose real name, by-the-bye, was Spook—she was the widow of Spook, the low comedian, who committed suicide) was a mature actress who had, so to say, travelled over the drama generally without having secured any special walk in it. She had been known to play Lady Macbeth, and she had been seen to dance a breakdown. It was hard to say which of these her efforts was the more or the less to be admired. Poor woe-begone looking lady, her only ambition was to secure an engagement, on whatever terms, and to be as useful as possible to her manager. Tragedy queens and comic soubrettes were alike to her, and she did not present them very differently to her audience. Her walking ladies, singing chambermaids, and her dancing burlesque princes alike partook of the colourless manner and sombre air which

were her natural possessions. Herr Doppelgänger was a German musical conductor, who stamped noisily with his feet, and beat his desk furiously with his baton. He was supposed to be especially skilled in providing tremulous and mysterious accompaniments to the more distressing passages of melodrama. But he had wandered, like a troubadour, from house to house. Owing to unexplained causes, his conductor's post had never known him long.

These, and such as these, were Float's "shutters," then. They were not as the rats which quit a sinking ship, but rather the rats, if such there be, which assemble just before, and in such wise presage the going down of the vessel. But did their theatres close because of them, or were they somehow magnetically drawn to a theatre over which ruin was certainly, in any case, impending—ruin which it was not possible for them or for any other performers to avert? This was the difficulty of the case. Did shutting up follow as of necessity the presence of the "shutters;" or were the "shutters" present because shutting up had become inevitable? I could elicit no explanation from Float upon this head. He contented himself, I think, with supernatural views, about which, of course, there could be no arguing. He regarded the engagement of the "shutters" as an evil omen and portent. Whithersoever they went discomfiture followed, he maintained. They were as so many death-watches. The fatal ticking commenced upon their assembling upon the stage, and before many days their manager was a manager no more. This theory was so far convenient, that its unreason prohibited controversy. To discuss the absurd is only to waste time.

"I told you so," said Float, upon my meeting him upon a subsequent occasion. "The Hexagon is in the market again."

It was true. After a brief and calamitous season the theatre had closed its doors. And the final moments of the undertaking had been attended by ignominious circumstances, which yet were not without precedent in theatrical annals. The band had gone "on strike." There had been "no treasury" for some weeks. Herr Doppelgänger, to do him justice, had remained at his post; but a conductor without an orchestra can, of course, achieve little in the way of harmonious sounds. There had been unseemly struggles in the wings. Various performers, flushed with physical exertion, had proclaimed vociferously to

the house that for some time past they had received no remuneration for their services, and therefore declined, firmly, but as they believed, respectfully, further to exert themselves. These mutineers were not the "shutters" it would seem, but raw, untutored, yet pretentious, and arrogant creatures. The "shutters"—Wraith, Double, and the rest—made no sign of this kind. They respected themselves, or their manager, or their public too much. They were not taken by surprise. They had been disciplined by misfortune, were well supplied with similar experiences of exhausted treasures and bankrupt impresarios. They had been so long accustomed to play to diminishing profits, that the absolute disappearance of their salaries brought with it no amazement. They had perhaps been prepared for and expected as much. The burden of affliction had come. Well, their shoulders had borne it before, and if need were could sustain it again. There was dignity about their attitude of uncomplaining calm and endurance. Still the theatre was in an uproar. Strange scenes were enacted upon the stage. An indignant manager had also made speeches from before the footlights denunciatory of the disloyalty of his company. A scanty audience roused from apathy by these strange incidents had yelled derisively, and flung half-pence upon the boards. Decency was disregarded. Angry recriminations, and the noise of pugilistic encounters, were heard to proceed from behind the scenes. It was all very lamentable and painful; and, as Float had stated, the Hexagon was "again in the market," where, indeed, it was very often to be found. And presently Wraith and Double, Miss Banshee, Mrs. Fetch, and Herr Doppelgänger, the company of "shutters," were again to be let with immediate possession.

It is comfortable to reflect, however, that the "shutters" do secure engagements—of an intermittent kind no doubt, and uncertain as to their emoluments—but still sufficient to provide these performers with subsistence. They appear and disappear, but they invariably reappear. The Hexagon closed, they are found at the Pentagon, or, failing that, at the Parallelogram, or the provinces afford them temporary refuge, and such triumphs as Wraith found, or deemed he found, at Wakefield, are open to them. No doubt they have rather mistaken their vocation, and eventually perhaps they may be landed in other occupations. Wraith may prosper as a teacher of elocution, and by aid of a limited number

of ladies and gentlemen, whom he has undertaken "to prepare for the stage," succeed in perpetuating the greater number of his much-prized yet rather preposterous theatrical traditions. Double, if he does not succumb to delirium tremens, may perhaps eventually thrive as a check-taker. A tobaccoist's shop may be in store for Miss Banshee, and Mrs. Fetch may find a position well suited to her abilities behind the bar of a dramatic public-house. Even Doppelgänger may possibly obtain sufficiently lucrative employment as the trombone player of a German band. In any case, failing here, he can always return to his native land. His departure will assuredly be borne with resignation by his acquaintances in this country.

And if these unfortunates are really to be described as "shutters" by Float and others, it must be remembered that there are failures and "misfits" in all vocations, "false starts" upon all the roads of life. As Sir Walter Scott once said, the stage must have its Guildensterns as well as its Hamlets. At the same time it is important to observe that there is no necessity for the Guildensterns being so numerous a body as to be out of all proportion to the Hamlets. And something of that kind has happened to the modern theatre.

TWO SIDES OF A STORY.

GRETCHEN'S SECOND CHAPTER. MR. SUTHERLAND.

CERTAINLY my father; though so different in dress, in bearing, and expression of countenance, that I could scarcely believe the evidence of my senses, which assured me beyond a doubt that it was he. He addressed Mimi with a familiar air, and passed her hand through his arm, and they proceeded to walk thus round the ball-room. I saw and heard confusedly, while my eyes followed mechanically the movements of those two. So stupefied was I, that the truth never flashed on me.

"Who is that gentleman?" I asked at last of Mr. Field—"I mean the gentleman who is walking with Mrs. Sutherland?"

Mr. Field smiled.

"I see you are not acquainted with your host," he said. "That is Mr. Sutherland."

"Mr. Sutherland!" I echoed, faintly, and drew back behind the curtain.

Mr. Field was not observant, except of the good points of horses and the naughty tricks of dogs.

I don't know how the next half-hour passed. I could not make my escape with-

out crossing the vast room, and I feared to meet my father face to face—for he was my father, whether Mr. Sutherland or not.

Listening to Mr. Field, and obliged to answer occasionally, I could not properly think the matter out. I could not find it possible by any twist of my thoughts that my father and Mr. Sutherland could be one and the same person. While I sat wrapt in my stupefaction, my curtain was drawn aside, and Mimi and my father stood right before my face.

"Henry," said Mimi, "allow me to present to you my dear friend, Miss Fairfax! Gretchen, this is my husband, Mr. Sutherland!"

When I raised my eyes I found my father looking at me with a terrified amazement, which, for some moments, seemed to paralyse him, so that he could neither speak nor move. By an effort he regained his presence of mind, and his eye held mine sternly, with a warning expression. As for me, I had no presence of mind, and I neither bowed nor spoke. I only stared at him blankly, while my arms fell straight and hung limp by my side.

Nearly a full minute passed, during which Mimi looked from me to her husband, and from her husband back to me. But I did not think of her at all. I was thinking of Fan in her grave, and of all this grandeur and luxury which seemed belonging to her father. It was some hours afterwards before I realised that Mimi must have thought the scene a strange one.

"Any friend of my wife's must, of course, be welcome to me," said Mr. Sutherland at last, speaking sharply, as if in pain. I bowed my head silently on my breast, and they passed on.

I hurried to my room as soon as I could escape from the gay scene below. I wanted to be quiet and to think. I wanted to find out who my father could be. What connexion did there exist between him and Edward Lance? If my father were a pretender, then how had he wronged Ned! And that he was a pretender I myself was a living witness. For I remembered the condition on which Mr. Sutherland's good fortune had been obtained. After some hours had passed, when the last of the carriages had rolled away, Mimi came in to me and sat down upon my bed.

"Gretchen!" she said, "I cannot sleep till I speak to you. What do you know about my husband? Why did you and he look so awfully at one another?"

"I know something about him, it is true,"

I said, "but I cannot tell you. I cannot tell you, and you must not ask me."

She reflected for a little. "It is about some friend of yours whom he has injured, I suppose. I have heard the like of it before. Your brother—but no, you never had a brother—your father——"

"My father!" I repeated, mechanically.

"Ah, that is it. Was your father a gambler?" she said, speaking in a whisper.

I paused for a moment, and then I said "Yes."

"And my husband, who is a gambler, ruined him, perhaps?"

I could not say "no," and somehow I did not dare to say "yes," though it would have been true. So I said: "Go away to bed, Mimi, and let us talk of this no more."

She left me as I bade her, sighing heavily as she went, and I did not sleep at all for thinking of the trouble. I guessed that my father would want to speak to me privately, and I was longing to be enlightened as to the mystery which hung about him. I dressed myself early, and went out to walk in the park. It was a fine, frosty morning, and wrapped in my warmest shawl, I went leisurely past the windows of the house, so that any one could see me who might be watching within, and then took my way out of sight among the trees. It was scarcely daylight, and the house was wrapped in sleep after the unusual dissipation of the night before. I was not wrong in supposing that I should be wanted. When a quarter of a mile from the house I heard footsteps following me, and, turning, came face to face with my father.

It is bitter, the memory of that interview. He unfolded to me deliberately the story of his present and his past. His real name was Sutherland, and he was indeed the person for whom the inheritance which he now enjoyed had been intended. Early in life he had been tempted to commit a fraud, and to escape the consequences had hidden himself in foreign places, and assumed the name of Fairfax. As Fairfax he had married my mother, who was a humble German maiden, and as Fairfax his children had ever known him. He had never ventured to recal himself to the memory of the friends whom he had disgraced, and he had almost forgotten the existence of the old relative who had so unexpectedly enriched him. On finding himself at last a wealthy and important man, his first step had been to take measures to prevent his being prosecuted for that fault of his youth, which he had confessed to me. He had attained this

object, he believed, but only by the sacrifice of large sums of money. It was true that he had committed a second fault in claiming his inheritance, by concealing the fact of his marriage with my mother. But, after all, this was not so great a fault as that of the old simpleton who had imposed such a ridiculous condition. To conceal that fact he had deserted his children, and to conceal it for evermore he was ready to do anything that was necessary for the purpose. Fan was dead, and Kitty abroad, where she would probably marry, and never be heard of any more. I was the only difficulty, and I need not be a great one, if I had only a little prudence.

"But, father!" I began.

"Hush!" he said, nervously. "Do you want to ruin me? You cannot stay here if you will not observe caution."

"I must go away from here in any case," I said. "I could not remain, things being as they are."

"I do not see that," he said. "Since chance has brought you here, so strangely, under my roof, I do not see why you now should go away. I can make you as comfortable as if you were acknowledged my daughter, and Mrs. Sutherland seems to like you, and things may yet be smooth enough. I have no doubt at all that I can marry you very honourably in the county before long. You are handsomer than I expected, and you used to have brains. In the event of your marriage, the name of Fairfax will be sunk, and all danger will then be over, once and for all."

But all the time I was thinking of Ned and his great wrong.

"You will see that this cannot be," I said, trying to be bold, for the words that must be spoken were very hard to speak. "Do you remember Edward Lance?"

My father started as if I had struck him.

"Well, what about him?" he said. "I had forgotten him; a young fool, who might have been in my place if he had been possessed of common sense!"

I did not know what this meant at that time, for Ned had never told me that had he but given up me, the great Sutherland fortune would have been certainly his own. I did not know how dear I had been to him, in more senses than one.

"We are doing him a dreadful wrong," I said. "The inheritance would be his if the truth were known."

"That is my affair," said my father, darkly, "and I will not hear of it from you."

"It is true that it is your affair," I said,

"but I must not conceal from you that I am his promised wife!"

"My father quailed at these words, and an awful look came over his eyes, as if he saw some dreaded judgment suddenly take unexpected shape and stare him in the face. He staggered, and leaned against a tree.

"No," he said, rallying, "no, no. This is only a piece of mischief. You are not such an idiot as to marry a man who is both a beggar and a fool!"

I shook my head. "He is neither beggar nor fool," I said. "I know him better than you do. He was the only one to take care of me in my day of desolation."

He winced again, and I pitied him from my heart. He was my father, and there was a fearful barrier between us. But I pitied myself more; for how was I to do justice between these two who stood so near to me?

My father now seemed to realise that he was wholly in my power. He stood before me at bay, and burst into bitter anger.

"You will ruin your own father," he said. "You will write to your lover, and set him on to hunt me down. You will take the bread out of my mouth to put it into your own. You will bring a curse on your head for the remainder of your days."

This is a small part of what he said. I might have answered that a father who had forsaken me had little claim on my care; but I could not say it, and I did not want to think it. I knew that he would never understand what was passing in my heart. It was useless attempting to explain it. His accusations and reproaches beat upon my brain till they broke down all my nerve, and I bowed my head and wrung my hands in despair.

"Indeed, indeed," I said, "I do not want to ruin you. Oh, that I had never known a suspicion of all this! Oh, that I had never come here!"

This outburst silenced him. All his passion vanished. He saw my doubt and trouble, and he took my hands gently.

"Promise me, at least," he said, "that you will take time to think of all this before you make up your mind to expose me. In a cooler moment you will see that it will be better for you quietly to get rid of this old lover. You will perceive that after all there would be a difficulty about his proving my marriage, which took place in an obscure corner of a foreign country. If he failed in the end in driving me from my position, he would only have lost time and got into serious difficulties. You would have done him great harm instead of good.

I believe that, upon reflection, you will agree to give him up, and, for the future, we can contrive to keep out of his way. And I will find you a better husband, I promise you, on my word."

My heart was too sick to let me speak. I only shook my head, and possibly my father took this as but a feeble dissent from his plan. It seemed to me that there were two heart-breaking things which I was bound before God to do without delay. To reveal my father's guilt, and to refuse to be Edward's wife. Not to refuse for a day and afterwards consent, but to refuse persistently, so that some other woman must enjoy that unlucky fortune which my act should have wrung from my father's hands.

"Promise me!" he said, more urgently, but in a tone of some relief.

"I can promise this much," I said: "that I will make no revelation without first giving you notice."

He flung away my hand with an angry word, which I did not catch; but the next moment he checked the expression of his disappointment.

"There," he said, more mildly, "I will not press on you too heavily at the first." He spoke as though I were a criminal, with whom he was going to deal leniently. "Remember, you are to think of the things I have put before you. I believe you are too sensible not to be guided by my advice."

Thus we parted, going different ways, I more dead than alive between cold and anguish. On the doorstep I met Mimi, looking out into the frost with a white, drawn face.

"Where have you been?" she asked, sharply, then answered her own question, saying: "You have been walking in the park with Mr. Sutherland."

"Yes," I said, quickly, "but you must not let him guess that you know it was so."

She gave me a strange, scared look, but said no more at that time. Whatever the reason might be, she held her husband in great awe. I do not think he was cruel to her, but she was a timid soul.

After that began for me a long period of pain and doubt, during which the thought of duty was a torment to me, and a heavier cloud seemed to hang over every day that dawned. Mr. Sutherland showed no intention of leaving the Sycamores, but settled himself as if for a long stay at home. In some of his habits I found that my father was improved. He showed more self-respect, and was at all times the gentle-

man. To me, in presence of others, he was courteous and distant in his manner, but he watched me incessantly, so that I saw he lived in terror of my betraying him. He was uneasy if I left the room where we all sat together, and if I walked out in the grounds he followed me, as if unintentionally, at some distance. At this time he certainly was not unkind to Mimi, but neither was he kind to her; he simply overlooked her. As for her, she became so changed that I scarcely recognised her. All her light spirits had become rapidly extinct. Her fitful alternations of humour were no more. Her gaiety was gone, and even her melancholy did not appear. She lived wrapped up in a great hush. I knew that she watched and wondered, and that vigilance and amazement absorbed all her life. She saw that there was something hanging over us all, a trouble which she could not grasp, a mystery which she might not penetrate. She had ceased to question me, but she also ceased to seek my company, and at times even shunned my presence. I had no power to break through this estrangement, so long as I kept my secret. Sitting alone in her own rooms, I do not doubt that she twisted the mystery into many fantastic shapes. She exaggerated the wonder till it became a horror in her eyes. She grew thin and white, and her step became weak and slow.

At last I said to myself, in desperation, that this could not go on. My father was clearly resolved to stay at the Sycamores to watch me. My letters to Ned were stiff, and no longer the true reflections of all that was passing in my mind. And the change was not unnoticed by him, for he reproached me gently for their abruptness, and made anxious inquiries about my spirits and health. I lived in an atmosphere of deceit. It were better far to take the dreadful step at once, than to suffer such misery, putting it off from day to day.

I made up my mind to leave the Sycamores, explaining fully to my father what I meant to do. On the evening before the morning on which I had resolved to depart I retired to my own room, and wrote two long letters, which cost me many a terrible effort, and many a bitter tear. One was to my father, explaining the course of conduct which I had marked out for myself, and the other was to Ned, telling the whole truth, and refusing to be his wife. I placed one in the letter-bag, which always lay at night on the hall-table, the other upon the desk in my father's study. He was dining

out that evening, and he would find my letter when he came home.

When all this was done, I went to take leave of Mimi. I went into her dressing-room, where she sat alone over the fire. I went in softly, and I noticed on her face, before she saw me, a sort of stricken look, which made my heart sink. Even the long bitter vigils which had prepared my letter to Ned had left a little life in me, so that I could pity a fellow-sufferer.

I came to her side, and wrapped my arms around her, but she shrank from me, and turned her head away.

"Look at me, Mimi," said I, "for this is a farewell visit. I am going to leave you very early in the morning."

She gave a low, wild, smothered cry, and gazing in my face, as if to try if I could be in earnest, she flung herself at my feet, and clasped me round the waist.

"Oh, no, no," she cried. "You cannot mean that. Oh, Gretchen, don't leave me the little while I have to live. It won't be very long, dear, but never, never leave me."

I was quite unprepared for such a scene as this. I had expected that she would be rather glad to get me away.

"It won't be very long, dear," she repeated, "for indeed and indeed I am going to die."

This new idea put for the moment all others out of my mind.

"Why, Mimi dear," I said, "what a miserable fancy. You are a little out of health and over-anxious, but you will live to be very happy yet, I trust." But as I spoke my heart misgave me. I saw no happiness for her upon any side.

She shook her head. "Let me have a little time with you," she said, "before I go. It is a long time since I knew that I have not a great while to live."

She then told me things about her health which filled me full of fears. She clung to me weeping, and reiterating her entreaty that I would not forsake her. I coaxed her to bed, and sat by her bedside till she fell asleep, which was not till I had promised that I would stay yet a little longer at the Sycamores.

I had intended leaving the house by day-break in the morning, walking to the railway station, and leaving my luggage to follow me. I now remembered that as I had given

up this plan, I must recover and reconsider my letters which I had written to my father and to Ned. One was in the post-bag, and the other was lying waiting upon my father's desk. When Mr. Sutherland had left home that evening, he had stated his intention of remaining absent till next day. I now thought this a fortunate chance, as it enabled me to recal my letter before he had seen it. I took a light in my hand, and went down the staircase to repossess myself of both my letters. To my great surprise I heard a noise below, and, on listening, found that my father had returned, and was at that moment in his study. So then my letter to him was quite irrecoverable. I hurried to the hall, determined at least to regain my packet which had been for Ned. On arriving at the spot where it was accustomed to lie all night, I found that the letter-bag had already been removed. This was strangely unfortunate, for the bag was not usually moved before six in the morning. My die was now cast, and I must wait for the result. But I resolved to do my best to keep my promise to Mimi.

I returned once more to my room, utterly wearied with perplexities and griefs. I felt that I had scarcely any care as to what might become of me. I seemed hardly to fear my father's anger, though my heart bled for his shame. And I wondered what Ned would say, and even more what Ned would do. I had just thrown myself on my bed, when I heard a key turned in my door from the outside. Then I knew that my father had read my letter, and that he was determined not to let me go. "Ah," I thought, "but he does not know that I have already written to Ned!"

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No. 135. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1871.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LVII. A SURPRISE.

MISS VERNON rang her bell, and the landlady looked in.

"Where is my maid? Can you tell me?" she inquired.

"In the hall, please, miss, at present, talking with Mr. Darkdale about the luggage, please, my lady," she answered in good faith, not knowing which maid she inquired for.

"Well, as soon as she has seen after those things, I should like her to come here," continued Miss Vernon.

"Do you wish to see Mr. Darkdale, miss?"

"No. Who is Mr. Darkdale?"

"We all thinks a deal of Mr. Darkdale down here," said the woman, reservedly.

"And why do you think so much of him?" inquired the young lady.

"Well, he brings a deal of business to us, one way or other, going and coming, and he's a very responsible man, he is. And Mr. Darkdale, please, miss, has a note from Lady Vernon for you."

"A note from mamma? Why, I have come straight from Roydon."

"He says, please, miss, that a letter came by the late post about an hour after you left, and your mamma sent him partly by rail, and partly on horseback, to overtake you here. If you please, miss, I'll fetch the letter."

"Thank you, very much," said Maud, suddenly alarmed.

She stood up, and awaited the return of the landlady of the Pig and Tinder-box, almost without breathing.

In a minute she reappeared with a large envelope, which she placed in the young

lady's fingers. It contained a note from Maximilla Medwyn to Maud, which consisted of a few lines only, rather hastily written, and said:

You have heard of Warhampton's illness. He is better; but I have not had a line from Lady Mardykes, and don't know whether she would yet like to have us at Carsbrook. I think we had better wait for a day or two. I will write to you the moment I hear from her. I am sure you agree with me.

At the corner of this letter Lady Vernon had written a few words in two oblique lines, thus:

Go on, notwithstanding. Don't think of turning back. I write to Maximilla by this evening's post.

B. E. V.

So she was to go on, and find neither Lady Mardykes nor her cousin at Carsbrook.

Well, Max would get Lady Vernon's letter at nine o'clock the next morning, and, we may be sure, would lose no time in joining Maud at Carsbrook, and before the day was over very likely Lady Mardykes herself would arrive. Max would make a point of coming forthwith, to relieve Maud from the oddity of her solitary state. She need not come down to breakfast, she determined; and on arriving she would go straight to her room. At all events, it was a mercy that her mamma, in the existing state of things, had not ordered her back to Roydon.

"Would you mind telling my maid to come here and take some tea?" said the young lady.

In a few minutes the shoes of the hostess were heard pattering along the tiles of the

passage, and coming in with a curtsy, she said:

"She's very thankful, miss, but, if you'll allow, she'd rayther sit in the carriage till your ladyship comes out."

"Very well. So she may," said the young lady. "How far is Carsbrook—Lady Mardykes's house—from this, do you happen to know?"

"We count it just twenty-two miles, miss. It might be half a mile less if the new bridge was open, but it ain't."

"Two-and-twenty. I thought it was only sixteen. Well, I'm not sorry, after all. The night is so very fine, and the moonlight so charming, it is quite a pleasure travelling to-night."

The young lady was really thinking that it would be better not to arrive until the guests had gone to their rooms. She did not hurry herself, therefore, over her cup of tea, which she drank from the state china of the Pig and Tinder-box.

She looked from the narrow window, and saw the carriage with four horses and two postilions at the door, and saw, also, the energetic figure of the grave man in the black great-coat, pacing slowly, this way and that, in the neighbourhood of the carriage-door, and now and then turning towards the hall of the inn, and looking at his watch in the light that shone through the door.

It was plain that the people outside were growing impatient, and Miss Vernon made up her mind to delay them no longer.

She took her leave of her new acquaintance, the hostess, in the hall. The man in the black coat opened the carriage-door, and Miss Vernon, handing in first a roll of music she was taking with her to Carsbrook, said, "Take this for a moment, and don't let it be crushed," was received by a dumpy gloved hand from the dark interior, and took her place beside her attendant, to whom, assuming her to be her old maid, Rebecca Jones, she did not immediately speak, but looked out of window listlessly on the landscape, as the carriage rolled away toward its destination from the inn-door.

"I wonder, Jones, you preferred sitting alone to coming in and drinking tea. It was better than they gave us at the what's-its-name?—the Green Dragon."

The person accosted cleared her voice with a little hesitation.

Trifling as was the sound, Miss Vernon detected a difference, and looked round with an odd sensation.

The figure in the corner was broader

and shorter than Jones's, and wore a big obsolete bonnet, such as that refined lady's-maid would not be seen in.

"You are not Jones?" said the young lady, after a pause.

A low giggle was the only answer.

"Who *are* you?" demanded the young lady, very uncomfortably.

"La! Miss Maud, don't you know me, miss?"

"I—I'm not sure. Will you say, please, who you are?"

"Dear me, miss, you know me as well as I know you."

She sat forward as she spoke, giggling.

"Yes, I see who you are. But where is Jones, my maid? She is not sitting outside?"

"Not she, miss; she's gone home to Roydon, please."

"Who sent her away?—I want her. It is quite impossible she can have gone home!"

"Please, miss," said the woman in a tone of much greater deference, for there was something dangerous in Maud's look and manner, "I got a written order from Lady Vernon yesterday, Miss Maud, directing me to be in attendance here to go on with you as your maid in place of Miss Jones."

The carriage in which they now were was something like the old-fashioned post-chaise. Miss Vernon, without another word, let down the front window, and called to the post-boys to stop.

They did accordingly pull up, and instantly the stern man in the black great-coat was at the side window.

"Anything wrong?" he said, in an undertone, to Mercy Creswell.

"No, no," she whispered, with a nod, "nothing."

"Now, if you please, Creswell, you'll show me that note of mamma's. I must see it, or I shan't go on."

The man stood back a little, so that Maud could not see him at the open window; but with this precaution, he kept his ear as close to it as he could, and was plainly listening with the closest attention.

"Certainly, miss, you shall read it," said Mercy, fumbling in haste in her pocket. Indeed, she seemed, as she would have said, in a bit of a fluster.

She did produce it, and Maud had no difficulty in reading the bold writing in the moonlight.

It was a short, very clear, very peremptory note, to the effect she had stated.

"How did my maid go without my being so much as told of it?" demanded Miss Vernon, fiercely.

Half a step sideways brought the man in the black coat to the window.

"Please, Miss Vernon," said he, very quietly, but firmly, "I received instructions from Lady Vernon to send Miss Jones home to Roydon, precisely as she has gone, by the return horses, in her ladyship's carriage, as far as the Green Dragon, on Dorminbury Common, and so on, in charge of her ladyship's servants, and without any interview beforehand with you, all which I have accordingly done. If her ladyship did not acquaint you beforehand, or if any disappointment results to you in any way, I regret having had to disoblige you."

For some seconds Maud made no answer. Those who knew her would have seen in her fine eyes the evidence of her anger. I dare say she was on the point of ordering the drivers to turn the horses about, and of going back to Roydon.

But that impulse of her indignation did not last long. She looked at the man, whose intelligent, commanding, and somewhat stern face was new to her, and asked, with some hesitation:

"Are you a servant of Lady Vernon's?"

"Only for this journey, miss."

"But—but what are your duties?"

"I look after your luggage, miss, and pay the turnpikes, and settle for the horses, and take your orders, please, miss."

Although this man was perfectly civil, there was something in his manner by no means so deferential and ceremonious as she was accustomed to. He looked in her face with no awe whatever, and at her dress, and leaned his hand on the carriage window. And when she leaned back a little, to recollect what next she should ask him, he touched Mercy Creswell's arm with his finger, and whispered some words in the ear which she placed near the window.

"I've made up my mind. I shall go on. Tell them to go on," said the young lady, indignant at these free-and-easy ways.

Mercy Creswell gave the man a clandestine look from the window, which he returned with a stern smile, and instantly calling to the post-boys "All right," he mounted the seat behind, and the journey proceeded.

CHAPTER LVIII. LAMPS IN THE DARK.

THE carriage drove on. Lady Vernon had certainly, Maud thought, treated her very oddly. It was not the first time, how-

ever, that she had snubbed or puzzled her daughter; and when Maud had a little got over her resentment, she resolved that she could not think of visiting her vexation upon the innocent Mercy Creswell.

She was leaving constraint and gloom behind her at Roydon. Nearer and nearer were the friendly voices, the music, and laughter of Carsbrook, and she could fancy the lights of that festive place already visible on the horizon.

"I dare say something has suddenly happened to make it unavoidable that mamma should have Jones back again with her at Roydon," said the young lady. "I wonder what it can be. I hope it is nothing that could vex poor Jones; have you any idea, Mercy?"

"Me! La! no, miss!" said Mercy. "I do suppose Miss Jones will come after you hot-foot. Like enough your mamma has heard of some grand doings she didn't know of before, and means to send some more jewels, or fans, or finery, or dresses, after you, and that is what I thinks."

"Well, that is possible; it can't be, after all, anything very wonderful, whatever it is. What is the name of that man who is acting as a sort of courier for this journey?"

"I don't know, miss," said Mercy Creswell, instantly.

"If he is a servant he certainly knows very little about his business," said the young lady. "However, that need not trouble us much, as we are to part with him at the end of our journey. You know the country, I suppose, between this and Carsbrook?"

"Oh?" she said with a prolonged and dubious interrogation in the tone. "Do I know the country betwixt this and there? Well, yes, I do. Oh, to be sure I do—hevery inch! We'll change next at Torvey's Cross, unless Mr. Darkdale have made other arrangements."

"Oh! Darkdale? Is that the name of the man?" asked Maud.

"Well, I won't be too sure, but I think I heard some one call him Darkdale. It may 'a bin down there at the Pig and Tinder-box; but I don't suppose his name is of no great consequence," answered Miss Mercy Creswell, endeavouring to brazen out a good deal of confusion.

"And what is Mr. Darkdale? Is he a servant; or what is he? He looks more like a poor schoolmaster," said Miss Vernon.

"La, miss! What could I know about him?" exclaimed Mercy Creswell, oracularly. "Next to nothing, sure. Did they

say I knewed anything about him? La! Nonsense!"

"I want to know what he is, or what he was," said Miss Vernon, unable to account for her fat companion's fencing with her questions.

Miss Creswell plainly did not know the extent of Maud's information, and hesitated to say anything definite.

"The old woman down there at the Pig and Tinder-box—she doesn't know next to nothing about him, or me. I don't know what she was saying, I'm sure; not a pin's worth."

There was a slight interrogative tone in this discrediting of the hostess, who, for aught she knew, had been talking in her gossiping fashion with Maud.

But Maud did not help her by saying anything.

"He was a postmaster, I'm told, somewhere in Cheshire, and kept a stationer's shop. I'm sure I don't know."

"But what is he now?" asked Maud, whose suspicions began to be roused by Mercy Creswell's unaccountable reluctance.

"What is he now? Well, I believe he is a sort of under-steward to a clergyman. That's what I think."

"You seem not to wish to tell me what you know about this man; and I can't conceive why you should make a mystery of it. But if there is any difficulty I am sure I don't care, provided he is a person of good character, which I suppose mamma took care to ascertain."

"That I do know, miss. He is a most respectable man is Daniel Darkdale; he is a man that has been trusted by many, miss, and never found wanting. La! He has had untold wealth in his keeping, has Mr. Darkdale, many times, and there is therefore no doubt that he would trust him with all they has, and knows him well too."

"And you say our next change of horses will be at a place called Torvey's Cross?" said Miss Vernon, interrupting, for her interest in Mr. Darkdale had worn itself out. "This is a very wide moor. Have we a long way still to go before we reach Torvey's Cross?"

Mercy put her head out of the window, and the moonlight fell upon her flat, flabby face.

"Ay, there'll be near four miles still to go. When we come to the Seven Sallies—I can see them now—there will be still three miles betwixt us and it."

"How do you come to know this road so very well?" inquired Maud.

"Well, I do; and why shouldn't I, miss, as you say, seeing I was so long a time in Lady Mardykes's service, and many a time I drove the road to Carsbrook before now. Will you 'av a sangwige, miss?"

She had disentangled by this time, from a little basket in her lap, a roll of rather greasy newspaper, in which the proffered delicacies were wrapped up.

Maud declined politely, and Miss Mercy, with a word of apology for the liberty, stuffed them, one after another, into her own mouth.

Maud was a good deal disgusted at the vulgarity and greediness of her new waiting-maid, as well as upset, like every other lady in similar circumstances, by the loss of her old one. She was sustained, however, in this serious bereavement by agreeable and exciting anticipations of all that awaited her at Carsbrook.

"When were you last at Carsbrook?" asked the young lady, so soon as Miss Creswell had finished her sandwiches, and popped the paper out of the window, brushed away the crumbs from her lap, and wiped her mouth with her handkerchief, briskly.

"This morning, miss," she answered, with that odd preliminary hesitation that made Miss Vernon uncomfortable.

"Are you there as a servant, or how is it? I should like to know exactly whether you are my servant, or whose servant."

"Lady Vernon's at present, miss, to attend upon you, please," said Mercy Creswell, clearing her voice.

"Were you ever a lady's-maid?"

"Oh, la! yes, miss; I was, I may say, Lady Mardykes's maid all the time she was down, three years ago, at Mardykes Hall, near Golden Friars; you have heard of it, miss; it is such a beautiful place."

Maud could hardly believe that Lady Mardykes could have had such a person for her maid, as she looked at her square body and clumsy hands, in the dim light, and bethought her that she had never heard that Mercy Creswell had shown the smallest aptitude for such a post. Certainly if she was a tolerable lady's-maid she looked the part very badly. It was unspeakably provoking.

By this time they had passed the Seven Sallies, and changed horses again at Torvey's Cross; and now, a mile or two on, the road, which had hitherto traversed a particularly open and rather bare country, plunged suddenly into a close wood of lofty fir-trees.

The post-boys very soon slackened the pace at which they had been driving. It became indeed so dark, that they could hardly proceed at all without danger.

It is a region of wood which might rival the pine forests of Norway. No ray of moonlight streaked the road. It is just wide enough for two carriages to pass, and the trunks of the great trees rear themselves at each side in a perspective, dim enough in daylight, and showing like a long and irregular colonnade, but now so little discernible, that the man in the back seat called to the drivers to pull up.

His voice was easily heard, for this road is carpeted with the perpetually falling showers of withered vegetation that serves for leaves upon the sprays and branches that overhang it, and hoofs and wheels pass on with dull and muffled sounds.

Now that they had come to a standstill, Maud lowered the window, and asked a question of Mr. Darkdale—a name not inappropriate to such a scene—who had got down, and stood, hardly discernible, outside, opening something he had just taken from his breast-pocket.

"Can we get on?" inquired she, a good deal alarmed.

"Yes, miss," he answered.

"But we can't see."

"We'll see well enough, miss, when I light the lamps."

"I say, Daniel, there's lamps a-following of us," exclaimed Miss Creswell, who, hearing some odd sounds, had thrust her head and shoulders out of the window at her own side.

"There are lamps here," he answered.

"No, but listen, and look behind you," said Mercy Creswell, with suppressed impatience.

The man turned and listened; Maud, whose curiosity and some slight sense of alarm were excited, partly by the profound darkness, and partly by the silence, looked from the window at her side, and saw two carriage-lamps gliding toward them, and faintly lighting the backs of four horses jogging on, with postilions duly mounted, just visible, and still pretty distant.

Mr. Darkdale bestirred himself, for these postilions were palpably quickening their pace, a rather reckless proceeding in a pass so profoundly dark.

He took down one of the carriage-lamps, and lighting it with a match, shouted:

"Hallo! Look ahead!"

The warning light that sprang thus suddenly out of darkness, and the voice,

seemed hardly to act as a damper on the ardour of the postilions; and Maud heard distinctly those sounds to which, probably, quick-eared Mercy Creswell had referred.

She mistook them first for the laughter and vociferation of a rollicking party on their way home from a supper-party. But she soon perceived, with alarm, that they indicated something very different.

They were sounds of fury and terror. She heard a voice exerting itself in short gasps and shrieks, and declaiming with frightful volubility:

"I say Vivian's my name! Murder, murder—my God!—two to one—they're murdering me!" yelled this voice, which, disguised as it was with rage and terror, she nevertheless fancied she knew, and exactly as the chaise drove by, at a suddenly stimulated pace, the window was broken, and the jingling glass showered on the road close beside the wheels; and, in the flash of the lamp, Miss Vernon had a momentary glimpse of the cantering horses and the postilions lashing them, and of the hands and faces of men struggling within, and, as the strange phantasmagoria flew by, "Hallo! I'm here—Daniel Darkdale. Pull up; stop. Hallo!" yelled Mr. Darkdale, grimly.

And he ran on in the direction in which the carriage had passed, shouting, as he followed, "I'm Daniel Darkdale. Hallo!"

There was a magic in this name, which brought the chaise, a very little way further on, to a sudden stop.

CHAPTER LIX. MR. DARKDALE'S GUEST.

"THIS will never do," said Mr. Darkdale, sharply, striding up to the carriage window, from which cries of "murder" were still proceeding. "What's going on here?"

"Two assassins trying to murder me, here in this carriage, sir. For God's sake, sir, see me safe out of this. They have pinioned me."

Mr. Darkdale put his hand through the broken window and let it down a little, and then withdrawing it, let the window down altogether, and popped his head in, holding the lamp, which he still carried, close to the window, so as to light up the interior with a rather fierce and sudden glare.

"Who are you, sir?" he asked of the young man who, with a torn shirt-front, disordered hair and necktie, and a very pale face, across which a smear of blood showed rather ghastly, was staring with wild eyes.

There were two powerful-looking men, sitting one at each side, hot and blown after the struggle. With these Mr. Darkdale exchanged a significant glance, and said:

"You'll give me your names, you two. You know Mr. Darkdale, you know me—Daniel Darkdale?"

The two men exchanged a sheepish look, as if they would have winked at one another, and gave their names.

"I'm the constable of this county, sir," said Mr. Darkdale, in a loud voice. "I'm pretty well known. I'll set all this right. If they have injured you they shall be made examples of. They have secured your hands somehow?"

"Yes. I'm a cavalry officer. My name is Vivian—that is, it will do as well as another," cried the gentleman, in high excitement, gabbling at that gallop which recognises no stop longer than a comma, and hardly that. "I had been down in that part of the country behind us a good way, you know, and I wanted to get back to my quarters; and this man had a carriage, and I could not get another"—the injured man was talking at such a pace that the foam appeared at the corners of his lips—"and he undertook to give me a lift to Chatham; and this other fellow—d—them, they are both murderers, I say, get my arms out." And he began to tug again.

"Wait a moment. I have a reason. You'll say I'm right in a moment," Mr. Darkdale, leaning in, sternly whispered in his ear.

He opened the door.

"I say, you come out, till I hear this gentleman's complaint," he said to the man next the door.

He obeyed, and walked a little to the rear of the chaise, and the officer sat close to the window next Mr. Darkdale.

"Don't you be listening," said Darkdale to the other. "Now, sir, we shan't be overheard; tell me the rest, pray."

"He asked for leave to take in that fellow, who said he wanted to go on to Chatham, and they wished to play 'blind-hook' with me, and I like the game, and said yes, and they had cards, and I told them how I was used, very badly, I'll tell you by-and-bye, and they seemed very agreeable, and I had been kept awake all night, last night, by half a dozen scoundrels drilling in the room next mine, with a couple of sergeants and a drum, you can't conceive such an infernal noise, like so many ghosts out of hell, I know very well why it was

done; there's a fellow, Major Spooner, he has been doing everything imagination can devise, by Heaven, to make the army too hot for me, but I think I have a way of hitting him rather hard, ha! ha! and when I was asleep, as sound as if I had made three forced marches without a halt, those two robbers, agents they are of the same villain, gambling, rascally murderers, tied my arms behind my back, and only for you, sir, I should have been robbed and murdered by this time."

"I should not wonder, sir," said Darkdale. "I should not wonder. But I have them pretty fast, now. I have their names, and I know their faces; I have seen them long ago; and I'll have them up for it. Don't you be listening; allow me, sir, to whisper a word in your ear. You'll be at the next posting-house very soon, an hour or less. Those fellows are frightened, now, and they will try to make it up with you. Don't you be such a muff. They would be very glad, now, to loose your hands; don't you allow it. I'll get up behind, so soon as they are in, without their knowing it, and I'll have them arrested the moment we arrive, and I'll have witnesses to see how they have tied your hands, and I'll compel them to disclose their connexion with that blackguard, Major Spooner, and I'll lay you twenty pounds they'll split. Do you like my plan?"

"Uncommonly," whispered the young man close to his ear.

"Well, when he gets in, do you pretend to be asleep, and if they try to undo the pinion, don't you let them—hush! Mind what I say. We'll pay the whole lot off."

"Will you?" gasped the pinioned traveller. "By Heavens, then, I'll do it, I'll bear it, I say I will; anything to bring it home to Spooner, he's so cunning; the villain, he's as hard to catch as a ghost, never mind, I'll have him yet, the scoundrel, I wish this thing wasn't quite so tight, though, by Jove, it does hurt me, never mind, it is worth some trouble, we'll catch them, it's a serious thing, this outrage, and if you can show they aimed at my life, it will be a bad business for Spooner, ha! ha! and if I can't hang him, whenever I get a fair chance, I'll shoot him, by Heaven, I'll shoot him—I'll shoot him dead if it was in church!"

"Hush—don't mind. Here comes the fellow. We understand one another—you and I—eh?"

"All right." And the voluble gentleman, with his arms tied behind him, and ex-

tremely uncomfortable, would have run on again with a similar declamation, if Mr. Darkdale had not said, with a peremptory gesture of caution:

"They'll hear us; not another word."

He drew back, and walked toward the man whom he had just ejected from the carriage, and he said very low, and without turning his head, a few words in his ear, ending with:

"'Twill be all right now; get on at the best lick you can. You must be there in forty-five minutes sharp."

The man gave his orders to the postilions, and got into the carriage, and away they whirled at a great pace, flashing a fiery streak from their lamps along each brown trunk as they flew by on the close forest road.

Mr. Darkdale stood, lamp in hand, for a minute, watching the retreating equipage; and then turned and approached his own carriage, which he had left standing about a hundred paces in the rear.

DOUBLE PEOPLE.

IF Miss (or the Misses) Millie-Christine should quarrel, it would be no easy matter for her (or them) to part company. She (or they) must submit to any incompatibility of temper and tastes: seeing that her (or their) fate is unified for life. And if any gentleman (or gentlemen), whity-brown or dark brown, should pop the question to her (or them), there would be two (or four) wills to consult in the matter, to avoid a still farther complication of incompatibilities.

This is of course very clumsy phrasology; but what is to be done? How are we to decide whether the singular or the plural number is to be used? As Millie-Christine can certainly talk in two different voices, together or separately, can express two different sentiments at the same time, and can have two simultaneous opinions on the same subject, it is more convenient to use the plural number. Then about dancing. There was a Spaniard in London a few years ago who danced on one leg in a very wonderful way; there are other men who can double-shuffle on two legs with much dexterity; and there are two pantomimists who contrive so to dress themselves as to appear to dance upon three legs, the fourth being stowed away in some ingenious fashion; but no one human being ever danced a pas-de-deux on four legs. Then

Millie-Christine sing soprano and mezzo-soprano, and very prettily too. Moreover, Millie would not be satisfied if Christine alone had her dinner; she also has an appetite, and mutton for two would be in requisition. When *Hermia* and *Helena*, in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, had a temporary misunderstanding about love matters, the latter gave a charming description of a kind of double existence, one mind in two bodies:

We, *Hermia*, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted;
But yet a union in partition,
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem:
So with two seeming bodies, but one heart.

Millie and Christine have two hearts and two minds; *Hermia* and *Helena* (according to Shakespeare) two bodies and one heart.

Deviations from ordinary organisation are often presented in very odd ways, both in the genus *homo* and among the lower animals; sometimes we find more or less than the proper number of limbs, sometimes a strange rudiment of some other being. In 1765, there was a calf born at Bettws Abergele, in North Wales, having two heads, four eyes, four ears, two mouths, two necks, but body and legs as usual; it sucked with both mouths during the few days of its existence. In 1759, the *Memoirs* of the Berlin Academy of Sciences contained an account of a puppy-dog born with a rudimentary turkey-cock's head, but with no mouth, nose, or eyes; a red pendulent mass, like the red gills of a turkey-cock, contained the first beginnings of a hooked beak. Of course the creature died very soon after birth. In 1808, there was a three-legged calf at Westrip, in Gloucestershire; two legs were in front, and the odd one behind, and the animal walked along tolerably well. In the same year there was caught a partridge with three wings, one growing out of the breast. A double-headed bull-calf was exhibited at Tenbury in 1780; whether it had a double appetite, a double capacity for food, is not recorded; but it ate with two mouths. In 1806, the *Union, East Indiaman*, brought to England a dog with two noses. There was a cat at Greenock, early in the century, with four ears on one head, eight feet, and two tails. A still-born heifer has been described, at a village near Lincoln, with two heads united into one, one neck, one heart, and two tails.

Boys and girls, men and women, have often had less than the usual number of toes, fingers, and other members. The Memoirs of the Berlin Academy (already mentioned) contain an account of a whole family of negroes living near Paramaribo, born without thumbs; and each foot was something like a lobster's claw where the toes ought to have been. In 1764, a boy-infant was born without a right hand; he grew up, married, and had a child similarly deficient in a right hand. About the same time a healthy child was born without arms or even shoulders. The once-celebrated Miss Biffin, born without hands or feet, managed, in an extraordinary way, to draw and write with the implements held between the stumps. People with one finger only, one toe only, a thumb and little finger only, forefinger and no thumb, are to be met with. On the other hand, instances are not uncommon of persons endowed with more than an equitable proportion of such aids. An old man named Carolan died at Meath in the last century, having six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot. A boy near Ely was born with even more than this number—twenty-eight thumbs, fingers, and toes, in all. Another boy, near Market Drayton, had three arms and three legs; the additional limbs were imperfect, and grew from the trunk in a very strange way.

Concerning double people, twins united in an abnormal manner at birth, the authentic records are numerous, but cannot be discussed at any length in these pages; a few examples must suffice. In 1701, united twins were born at Szany, in Hungary; they were christened by the names of Helen and Judith, and were exhibited for some years in the chief cities of Europe. They were joined together at the lower part of the back, the faces and bodies being half sideways or diagonal, neither back to back nor side by side. The two girls were not equally strong, nor equally well made; one had a more resolute will than the other, and settled all questions as to whether to move, and whither. Being carefully educated, they read, recited, and sang well, conversed in Hungarian, German, French, and English, and afforded much scope for study to psychologists; for there was sufficient difference between them in strength, temper, health, and intellect, to give play to two sets of forces, mental as well as bodily. It was observed, however, that when one was ill, the other became more or less affected with the same

complaint; and it was deemed probable that their deaths would be nearly simultaneous. This proved to be the case. Judith was attacked with a complicated disease of brain and lungs in 1723, and died; Helen, who at the commencement of her sister's malady was in good health, soon sickened with her, and the two died almost at the same instant. They were buried in a convent graveyard at Presburg, and the particulars of their remarkable history found admission into the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society.

In 1765, the local journals give an account of one Susan Gutteridge, the wife of a pensioner at Hadleigh, near Ipswich, who had three children at a birth; two were joined together at the middle part of the body; all three had an existence of only a few hours. The Anatomical Museum at Leyden contained some years ago (and perhaps still contains) the preserved remains of a two-headed child, with the inscription, "Un enfant avec deux têtes bien formées, né à Jutphaas près d'Utrecht dans l'année 1785." Such instances of partial doubleness are much more numerous than those of the more complete Helen-Judith and Millie-Christine kind. The most extraordinary on record, perhaps, was one which was described by Sir Everard Home in a letter to John Hunter, the great surgeon; it was a Hindoo double-headed boy, born near Burdwan, in Bengal; and the degree of sympathy, or absence of sympathy, between the two heads was watched with much interest. The particulars are given in the Philosophical Transactions. There was another case of a man named Lazarus, or rather a double man named Lazarus-Johannes, very attractive to sight-seers in Germany several years ago. There was much of a curious character in the degree in which the feeding of Lazarus helped to feed Johannes, without any distinct participation of the latter in the eating process. As the Johannes portion of the duplex was less fully developed than Lazarus, some discussion arose among the ecclesiastics as to whether each half had a soul to be saved, distinct from the other; it was decided in the affirmative, and the two names of Lazarus and Johannes were given in baptism. The men were alive at the age of twenty-eight, but we have no mention of their age at death. Mary Poynter, the wife of a labouring man at Kyrewood, in Worcestershire, gave birth to a baby child which was rather more single than double, having only one pair of lower limbs, and

many other parts of the system duplex. Such appears to have been the case also with Rita-Christina, born in Sardinia in 1826, and taken to Paris for exhibition; it was no easy matter to decide whether there were two little Italian babies to be looked at or only one: whether Rita and Christina were two names for two beings, or a double name for a complex unit.

Many of our readers are, no doubt, familiar with the appearance of the Siamese twins, who were exhibited in London in their youth, and again, a short time ago, in their maturer years. The twins are more completely two human beings than any others we have here spoken of; for the only physical or organised band of connexion between them is at the two chests. In one of Doctor Todd's medical works a description is given, which conveys a sufficiently clear notion of the nature of this band to those who have neither seen the twins themselves nor pictures of them. When first exhibited, they were not exactly opposite to each other, but stood side by side, or rather obliquely one by another; but this position, there can be little doubt, was acquired by the attempts which they had instinctively made to separate from each other in walking, or in lying and sitting down, and by the extension they had thus effected in their band of union, which was considerably more slender than in any other yet described. It was quite impossible for them to remain always face to face; therefore their bodies acquired an oblique direction, in which they also moved. The consequence of this was, that the right limbs of the one and the left of the other individual were the principal organs of movement, and that the intermediate limbs (that is to say, the left of the one and the right of the other) remained nearly passive. In organic and animal relation of life, they seem to be independent of each other. Each has his own circulation of the blood, his own respirative and digestive functions. The curious, yellow-skinned couple were wont to play at battledore and shuttlecock with each other; one had a battledore in his right hand, the other had one in his left, and very deftly they tossed the feathered messenger to and fro.

We therefore see that Millie-Christine is (or are) not without predecessors in this very remarkable walk in life. They are more closely united than the Siamese twins; and there can never be any question of separating them by surgical means. They must be

with each other till they die, a duality in unity, for better or for worse; and if—in their talking, singing, dancing, eating, drinking, sleeping—there can be harmony of sentiment and temper as well as junction of person (and they themselves say that such is really the case), all the more bearable will their strange existence be. Like Helen and Judith, the Hungarians, they cannot stand precisely side by side; the coalescence of their frames renders necessary a kind of diagonal position; but use has enabled them to overcome most of the awkwardness that would otherwise result. Helen-Judith, if now living, would be great objects of interest to Millie-Christine, and vice versa; for the two pairs seem to have made a nearer approach to similarity than any other examples of such *lusus naturæ*.

What would be the status of double people in the eye of the law? Could they hold property, and how? Would an insurance office grant two insurances or annuities, or limit the number to one of each? If Millie-Christine have money, could they invest it in consols; and would the Bank of England require one entry or two entries of names in the books? And could each make a will irrespective of the other? Again: if Woman's Rights are ever granted, would Millie-Christine give one vote or two at a general election? And would they be "the honourable member" or "the honourable members" when they came to take their seat in parliament? And if they become medical practitioners, would Doctor Millie and Doctor Christine receive one fee or two?

BARMECIDE DAINITIES.

ABOUT the regions of the Palais Royal, where, through the grating over the kitchens of those artists Vefour or Very, there used to float upwards a fragrant cloud charged with the most delicious extracts and savours in the world, a number of gaunt faces were to be seen bent forward, regaling themselves on the feast, after the only fashion permitted to them—sniffing it wistfully and inhaling eagerly. Now precisely after the pattern of these famished epicures, I find myself, at times, hanging over certain inviting programmes, brought by nearly every post, with a persistency which shows that the senders are at least acquainted with the power of this spring of human character. Imagination kindles as I

read, tables fit for the gods spread themselves out, the air becomes heavy with the aroma of rare vintages, the purple of the grape glistens in the sunshine, and the taste becomes bewildered by innumerable beverages held to the lips, Tantalus-like, and snatched away; liquors foam and sparkle in the crystal goblets, and flasks with silver necks and heads, which are ranged round in dazzling rows. All this as I read; and yet the wild debauch is tolerably harmless. There is no headache, no intoxication, no reeling home; the pleasant carouse is produced in this innocent fashion by certain unctuous circulars, which positively make you feel thirsty as you read. The entertainment is certainly far preferable, as regards health, to a demoralising visit to the Docks with a tasting order. Instead, too, of ruining myself with costly purchases, I quaff these catalogues, and mentally purchase large "parcels" for "laying down" in splendid condition. I can have them either in the wood or "the patent bin-case," which can be "packed by a child," and is secure from "breakage or pilferage." By "stacking any number of these cases, one on the other, a set of bins can be formed in any part of the house." I revel in this idea—in any part of the house, up-stairs, down-stairs, or in my lady's chamber. I can picture the enjoyment of having men to carry up the bins, while I "stack" and stack again, as the whim seizes me.

I would begin with sherries: and here is to be seen at once the folly of giving fancy prices, when for eighteenthpence I can have a sherry from "the large producing district" of Xeres, "possessing body, good flavour, and stimulating qualities." It is, moreover, a pale wine, and "suitable as a luncheon or dinner sherry—three years old in wood, and bottled in brilliant condition." All this for eighteenthpence, imbeciles! ye who give your four or five shillings a bottle for "laying down!" I notice that I can quaff from no less than twenty-two different brands, and that there is a sort of melodious gamut, as it were, which can be rung in chiming the praises of these vintages. All have "body, flavour, and stimulating qualities." But mark, some have "delicate flavour," some "fragrance," which latter virtue sells at the tenth degree, and at two and tenpence. At the fourteenth degree, and at three and six, we find the "dry luncheon and dinner or dessert sherry" lifting its head modestly. The "fine Amontillado flavour" begins to be discovered about the same

stage. At the sixteenth degree we find a little confusion and incoherence, not to say a perceptible thickness of utterance and tautology; thus, a wine is boasted as "possessing a dry Amontillado flavour, with fine delicate aroma," commendation which ought to be comprised in what followed being "suitable as a delicate Amontillado luncheon or dinner sherry." A step further, and we come on a "brown wine most suitable for dessert, having the dry East Indian character; also"—"I rub my eyes at the descent—"for drinking with water!" This is a poor virtue indeed. But we rally at the next step, and grow rapturous over "a superb dry Amontillado flavour, with delicacy of aroma, and which is offered to connoisseurs of sherry of the Amontillado character, as a choice wine for dinner or luncheon." Compare this with the next: "a gold wine, which is offered to connoisseurs of full-flavoured dry sherry, without the Amontillado character"—which is offered as "a choice dinner, luncheon, or dessert sherry;" and, in a bewilderment of vinous admiration, we come forward as "the connoisseur who can appreciate the high characteristics of really fine Amontillado sherry, and of one of the finest and oldest wines procurable."

In the department of ports, I admire the caution of recommendation, which hints that the two shilling article should only be produced at dessert. But it is vaguely added, "or for general consumption," which I interpret in this sense: it is to be set before the friend who has been dining with us, and whose nicer critical sense is blunted by satiety; or if we must have it out at other seasons, it will do for the village hospital, or the country visitor. Introducing it to your guest, you might conveniently quote the words of the description. "My dear boy, this glass of port is the produce of the Douro district. It has been selected after careful comparison, as possessing good body and excellent flavour. It is quite fit for present use, but will improve by age: it was bottled in brilliant condition." Such a guarantee would confound any doubts he might entertain as to its being suitable for "his own good body." Fourpence more, and we get the "fruity flavour, yet not too sweet on the palate:" sixpence, and the "fine aroma and rich flavour" manifest themselves. Later on come the "connoisseurs of fine old port wine," who, according to the grammatical construction of the sentence, have been "matured in the wood," and to whom it is

offered as possessing "superb dry flavour and great fragrance." But on this matter of port we little dream how the tongue can "grow wanton," as the immortal William says. In the finer sorts which we now approach, and I hope reverently, we hear of what is called "a bottled character," which would seem a natural quality in liquor that is bottled, but which may be assumed to have analogy to the "corked-up" character in the human race. It is also "exquisitely fine," has good bouquet and a great deal of "wing," "dry Burgundy flavour," "delicately silky," &c. It can be at the same time "tawny," have "exquisite aroma," and having "immense body with plenty of wing," which seems as if we were speaking of an insect. The highest cuccumium, however, seems to be the possession of "a fine finished bottled character," which again seems to me to be an over delicate refinement. Thus, it will be recollected, that master of sarcasm, the author of *Lothair*, accused one of his political rivals of wanting "finish;" we can almost hear him taking a lesson from the connoisseur of ports, and artfully disparaging some enemy, by admitting that he had the "bottled character," but wanted "finish."

In dealing with the French wines, I am sorry to find that the poet seems to have allowed his powers of description to be coloured by a sort of contempt for our unfortunate neighbours. For there is almost too much allusion to dilution with "two parts of water," with declarations that this vintage will not bear dilution with water. Too indifferent to give his imagination play, he repeats the old forms, "flavour," "matured in wood," and the like; and actually damns with such faint praise as "it will be esteemed as a cheap dinner wine." Again, what sort of commendation is this: "Has the advantage of age in bottle?" A truism, surely; as is also the following: "Is selected as having all the characteristics that are appreciated by the connoisseur in Rhine wines." This poor generality means nothing.

I was curious to see how the champagne vintage would be celebrated. Yet the first sample is not encouraging, where two and elevenpence is recommended as suitable for dinner, or for medicinal purposes. But the man cannot get over his incurable prejudice against a fallen nation. I might remind him that even the barbarous Mecklenburgh, and that Hun, Von der Tann, were delicately considerate as to the sacred-

ness of the Champagne districts. The French themselves, when introducing this ROYAL WINE, grew magnificent. It is the "grand vin d'Ay," it is "creaming," "mousseux," "rosée." But the highest praise (consonant with the highest price) that this grudging encomiast can utter is, "This very sparkling wine is the produce of one of the best situated vineyards in the Champagne district. It has been selected, after careful comparison with the choicest dry wines, as possessing great delicacy of flavour and fragrance, but from its extreme dryness this quality will be appreciated only by those who have acquired a taste for very dry champagne."

There are others of these Barmecide dainties, which I see daily spread out on the broad newspaper sheets, as on a table-cloth, and which really are appetising in the choice and unctuous phrases used. The conclusion really to be arrived at, is, that if one were in good faith to lay in a stock of these dainties, and if they at all corresponded to the epicurean language in which their qualities and virtues are described, we might at small cost enjoy a luxury, a ceaseless banqueting, which *Heliogabalus* himself might envy. We could not be so unreasonable as to bind these caterers by the almost extravagant perfections of the articles they proffer, but if we deduct even a handsome allowance of exaggeration, we should be more than content with the handsome balance that remains. If but a tithe of what we read were true, who would ask more than is held out to us in the advertisement sheets in which all that concerns food, drink, medicine, and other things would seem to be of a sort of Elysian excellence? Why, there is one article alone which in itself would appear to be "meat, drink, and clothes," and which, allowing a good-natured margin for the pardonable exaggeration prompted by the conscious pride of its proprietor, would alone suffice for all that man wants here below—need I say that I allude to a well-known panacea? Why, with such an article to be had, and had so cheaply, we go to the trouble of purveying other delicacies, is inconceivable to me. For a shilling or two we can secure a talisman more efficacious than *Saladin's* in *Scott's* romance. Mark, with it invalids can cure themselves, "without medicine, inconvenience, or expense;" it is "delicious, far more nourishing, digestible, and less expensive than meat." Have we children, then "delicate infants thrive on this food,

which imparts to them, in a pleasant form, all the elements of new blood, bone, muscle, brain." But these merits may be passed over lightly, as compared with their miraculous power in a therapeutic direction. Fancy seventy-two thousand cures of the most terrible maladies "of old and young, which had resisted all medical treatment, and had been abandoned as hopeless." After this feat we may give up physicians as dull bunglers. It might, indeed, be curious to inquire whether these seventy-two thousand cases would not be in excess of all that had been "abandoned as hopeless," and spread over a number of years. At least, I doubt if the whole College of Physicians would own to such a vast number of cases defying their skill. However, we, the patients, have this comfort, that between both, the exertions of the college and of this wonderful panacea, all cases, whether desperate or otherwise, may be comprised. The physicians may cure what they can: when they fail we may call in the panacea.

Another article, that makes one thirsty to read of, is called the Nourishing Stout, which I once remember covering the whole side of a newspaper, repeated in monotonous lines. It did all sorts of things this wonderful beverage; restored invalids to strength, made the sluggish buoyant, and was strongly encouraged by doctors. The sight of this capital title was in itself invigorating—it was like a pint of the beverage with the head on. Of the same family was Somebody's Bottled Cooper, which was described as "a gentle restorative, healthful, and life-giving, and universally recommended for the sick-bed." Many doctors, I noticed, joined with a generous warmth in these encomiums of its virtues. No doubt they had stood by the sick bed and seen the languishing patient raised up by partaking of a goodly goblet. But on scrutinising their really handsome testimonials, I was struck by the recurrence of such phrases as "the cooper which you were good enough to send me," "I have tried the cooper which you sent me," &c. One physician added that "he always continued to use it in his own family;" another "that he invariably prescribed it for his patients." I should not like to insinuate anything that would impair the value of these witnesses, but still I cannot help framing some such little domestic picture as this. Case of three dozen cooper arriving per rail at Doctor Diapoisson's country house, the family try-

ing it at dinner, the necessity of a suspended judgment and second supply, before the result on the health of the younger branches could have any marked result, and then gratitude for so warm and deliberate a judgment would surely prompt a further supply. Again, prescribing the Somebody's Cooper for Sir William Stubb's young family, would probably demand recognition of some sort.

What shall we say to "this celebrated and most delicious old mellow spirit, which is the very cream of Irish whisky?" Unctuous words these, "mellow," "cream"—we feel it gliding down our throats, and hail the familiar "LL," which beams out upon us, an old friend, from every newspaper in the kingdom. "Observe," it says, in a friendly way, "my pink label, seal and cork."

Once embark on the vast ocean of "baking powder," and we grow bewildered; which is it to be, Brown and Polson, Borwick, Sea Moss Farine, Oswego? All make the most "delicious" blanc-mange, puddings, custards, pastry, tarts, like a conjurer who brings such things out of a hat. One feature common to all is, that a single packet will make innumerable shapes—a dozen, I think—of blanc-mange or jelly. With so many fair claims how are we to decide? But I own that Sea Moss Farine, with its polychromatic pictures—its Neptune riding the billows—its versatility, so to speak, its elegance, as it were, seems more of a dazzling sort. Its fellows have a homely, house-keeping air. Farine is of a gaudy, attractive sort. However, this is all speculative, as I have not made trial; and I dare say Brown and Polson, Borwick, Oswego, Maizena, and others, if put on their mettle—rather, if they put on their metal freely—and exhibited showy, dashing advertisements, might convey the same idea.

Sances, too! I own to an exceeding penchant for Elizabeth Lazenby and her old-established Harvey, that old Tory piquancy, which has held its own honourably, in spite of a thousand revolutions, and, it must be said, much persecution. Our poor Elizabeth has been harassed by pretenders, and whenever I meet her in advertisements, seems to be under guard of some injunction from the Court of Chancery. There is Elizabeth's own signature, in a free hand, on her own bottles. She is not addicted to boasting, and has the comfort of knowing—wherever she be now—that she has helped off many a bad fish, and more bad cooking. That young radical

"Worcestershire" has merits of his own, though he has a jargon of his own about "digestion;" and that perpetual flourishing about "from the receipt of a nobleman in the country," savours of the pargenn. It is like some new rich man boasting, "Try that wine. Lord Tumbletowers sent it to me."

There is something inconclusive, too, in the recommendation. A nobleman having a receipt is no guarantee for excellence. Noblemen often have bad wine and other bad things. But this is a "nobleman in the country," and noblemen in the country, according to my experience, have worse articles than noblemen in town. Altogether, I cannot father this indorsement, though I have no doubt there are numbers of weak souls who would prefer the comestible on this account to the humble unheralded article of Elizabeth. Both are excellent.

There are many other articles which might coldly furnish forth our Barmecide table. But the reader can supply them for himself by glancing at his daily newspaper.

SUMMER CALM.

A SUMMER silence sits upon the lake,
No sound of plashing oar, no herd-boy's call,
To wake the mountain echoes. A soft haze,
A dreamy haze of pale and liquid gold
Hangs o'er the placid waters: glow so pure
As scarce to touch with fire the ruby specks
That gem the troutling's back.

Now comes the low
Of answering kine, knee-deep within the flood,
And now the hum of the brown-armoured bee,
Laden with spoil, of the rich scarlet flowers,
That glint amid the sedge: now with sharp "whirr"
The purple dragon-fly skims idly on,
His brief existence all an easy dream.
The fisher-heron beside the reedy pool
Poised on one leg, with eager head drawn back,
Scans the clear surface of the dimpled lake,
And strikes unerringly his silver prey.

Here, the broad flags their sturdy pennons wave,
And gently rustle as the kingly swan,
With arched neck and snowy plumes, sails by:
Here blue forget-me-nots their petals hide,
And water-lilies in their chaste white cups
Veil their gold-fringed eyes: a glorious calm
Lies on the bosom of sweet Windermere,
Fraught with the tender balm of summer peace.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

(SECOND SERIES.)

STONEY ROBINSON—HUNTING DOWN AN HEIRESS.

THE Hiltons of Hilton Castle, three miles west of Monkwearmouth, in the county of Durham, a family now extinct, used to boast of having been settled in power and affluence in the north country, three hundred years before the Conquest. This, at least, is certainly known, that in all

struggles, for good or evil, greed or feud, treason or loyalty, these same stalwart Hiltons of Hilton swung the axe and plied the sword with creditable zeal, and gave and received blows right manfully. Three Hiltons were left on the hot sands of Palestine by Richard the First, three went down near the banner of the Black Prince in a battle at Bordeaux, one was struck dead at Agincourt, two the Scots smote to the heart at Berwick-upon-Tweed, two shed their blood at St. Albans during the cruel Wars of the Roses, five were trodden underfoot in that desperate mêlée round the dead Crookback, at Bosworth, and four the Scottish swords swept down on the crimson hill of Flodden. "The highest noblesse of the north, without the peerage," says worthy old Surtees; and indeed at one time these long-armed Hiltons seem to have held a good third of the county of Durham, not to mention good slices of Yorkshire, Northumberland, and Cumberland. Old oaks, with far-stretching roots, were the Hiltons, and none of your potted out commercial biennials, showy in flower, but shallow-rooted and desperately perishable. After a proud series of twenty descents, stretching through five long troublous centuries, the blow, however, came at last. In Charles the First's reign, a Henry Hilton, conceiving some grievous, morbid, and incurable hatred against his own flesh and blood, deserted the old castle in the wooded vale by the river Wear, went to live in obscure retirement with a kinsman in Sussex, and finally in a last burst of spite and scorn, in 1641, left his whole property, for ninety-nine years, to the City of London, setting aside all "natural lives" for that severe probation. Then the old tree began to pine, the race dwindled down to petty drapers at Gateshead, and the light blew out.

Soon another great family, by marriage or purchase, got hands on Hilton, the old castle still haunted by the ghost of the "Cold lad" (a stable-boy killed in a rage by a Hilton of James the First's time). This race Surtees traces back to a certain cousin of Alan, the Black Earl of Richmond, who appointed him captain, with five hundred archers, of the Tower of Bowes. The family proved able, and intermarried (after its first really great man, a chief justice in Eyre, about 1310) with the Greenstocks, Fitzhughs, Conyers, Eures, Cliffords, Percys, and Ravensworths, frequently produced wardens of the Middle Marches, and was unchangeably

loyal by right of race. The best of the race was that brave and steadfast Sir George Bowes, who almost alone held out for Queen Elizabeth against the dangerous "Rising of the North," when the powerful Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, with the Dacres, Nortons, Markenfields, Ratcliffes, Tompests, and Swinburnes, raised the banner of the "Five Wounds," and defied the chivalry of the south, with that deplorable result so beautifully painted by Wordsworth in the *White Doe of Rylstone*, one of the most exquisite of his narrative poems.

Mary Eleanor, the sole heiress of this noble race, was the only daughter of George Bowes, M.P. for the county of Durham, who died in 1760, leaving his vast estates to his daughter, then only eleven years of age. At eighteen the young and pretty heiress was married to John Lyon, ninth Earl of Strathmore, and representative peer for Scotland in the House of Lords, who assumed the name of Bowes on his marriage. The earl, a good-natured, bland, commonplace person, as tradition records, proved probably a too indulgent husband, and did not enjoy any very special happiness with his accomplished, lively, capricious wife. Death, however, took him out of her way in April, 1776, when he died at Lisbon, leaving five children.

The young countess, only twenty-seven, pretty, lively, with literary tastes, and enormous wealth, had a fine house in Grosvenor-square, house, gardens, and conservatories at Chelsea, grand seats at Paul's Walden, Gibside, and Barnard Castle, besides the towers of Streatlam and Hilton, and broad, rich lands in Middlesex. To such a widow, so young, so gifted, so rich, suitors as disinterested as the flies that visit sugar-casks, and quite as pertinacious, came in swarms. A Mr. Grey, a nabob from the golden Indies, at first showed well in the front rank, but in ten months the nabob, with all his wealth, was ignominiously ousted by an Irish adventurer, one Lieutenant Andrew Stoney Robinson, of the County Tipperary, who had come to New-castle some years before, with his regiment, and carried off a Durham heiress with thirty thousand pounds, whom he had soon tormented and bullied out of existence. The dashing Irish widower sighed, ogled, whispered, danced, and finally won the north country countess, aided no doubt by the flatterers and parasites by whom the widow was surrounded. At this un-

lucky time, Mr. Jesse Foot, a surgeon at Stoney-Bowes, who wrote an account of her misfortunes, says the countess possessed a very pleasing embonpoint, and an uncommonly fine bust. She was rather under the middle height, her hair was brown, her eyes light, small, and near-sighted. Her face was round, her neck and shoulders were graceful, her lower jaw, rather ill-shaped, moved convulsively from side to side when she was in nervous agitation. Her fingers were small, her hands exceedingly delicate.

In person, Stoney Robinson was pleasing; his manner was soft, his height five feet ten inches, his eyes were bright and small, and well under his command. His eyebrows were low, large, and sandy, his hair was light, his complexion ruddy. He had an agreeable smile, and a ready wit, and he usually led off the laugh in a pleasant, genial way, that forced those listening to him to laugh also. He spoke low, and lisped. His conversation was shallow, and his education had been neglected. When he spoke, his long hooked nose moved in a ludicrous way in conjunction with his upper lip. According to Mr. W. E. Surtees, this matchless rascal (as will be presently proved) was showy without learning, cunning without prudence, and ambitious without perseverance; he brought with him, nevertheless, a pleasing address and person, and the eloquence, wit, and assurance which are said to be indigenous to the country of his birth.

Having broken his first wife's heart by the summary process of throwing her downstairs, shutting her up half naked for three consecutive days in a cold damp closet, allowing the miserable woman only an egg a day, Stoney Robinson, cleared out by an exhaustive sequence of cock-fighting and racing at watering-places, and gambling in the more disreputable clubs round St. James's-street, had from the first determined to lure the vain blue-stocking widow of Grosvenor-square into his pitfall. He dug his covered ways towards "that fort they call a heart," with the skill of a veteran engineer. He corrupted and won over by bribes, flattery, and various inducements, Mrs. Parish, the countess's governess, Miss Eliza Planta, the sister to the governess, and the confidante of the countess, and the Reverend Mr. Stephens, a credulous clergyman, who was about to marry Miss Eliza Planta. He also won over the chief visitors at the house—Mr. Matra, English consul in Barbary, Mr. Magin, a botanist, and

friend of that Dr. Solander who accompanied Captain Cook, and who was celebrated for performing solos on the Otaheite nose flute at fashionable musical soirées. These people all became his creatures, and worked for him at the net he was weaving for the foolish and unsuspecting countess. Once introduced to the countess, all would be plain sailing, and that introduction he soon got by his friends at court, and through Durham, his acquaintance. He became interested in rare plants, fond of poetry, romantic and visionary, like the fair widow. He tutored a conjurer of the day, and planned with Miss Planta a party to which the countess was invited, when the linking of the two fortunes was distinctly foretold. He hesitated at no trick, forgery, or stratagem. Letters stamped with the Durham post-mark were sent by him to the countess, purporting to be from a reproachful lady, who complained that, for love of the countess, Stoney Robinson had forsaken her. He spread dark suspicions that Mr. Gray, his rival the nabob, was supported by the late Lord Strathmore's relatives, whom the countess dreaded and detested. Last of all, he tried his crowning master-stroke. He wrote virulent anonymous attacks in the *Morning Post* on the countess; he hinted at intrigues, derided her as a poetess, denied that she was a linguist, analysed and exposed her whole life, heaping up, as Mr. William Howitt says in his admirable summary of Mr. Jesse Foot's book, the most malicious and irritating exaggerations. A violent and angry correspondence ensued, and the public listened, as they will listen to any lie against a well-known person. The friends of the dead lord were delighted, because they hoped that this scandal and vexation would frighten off the fickle countess from a second marriage, and keep the great property undisturbed for the children. Poor creatures, they little knew the arch devil they had to deal with in Stoney Robinson! That worthy gentleman bided his time. The fruit was all but ripe. The touch came, and it fell. One day the pretty widow, stung to the quick by another of those newspaper wasps, stood up, her fair face flushed with anger, her blue eyes bright with tears of rage, and declared, in presence of her little court of parasites, that to the brave man who would challenge and fight "Parson Bates," the obnoxious, cruel, and relentless editor, she would at once give her hand and heart. This paroxysm had been foreseen by the bland scoundrel at

her side. It had been arranged between him and Parson Bates that there should be a sham duel. The blustering challenge was sent, a bullying answer returned, the men met and fought. Both were wounded—at least their doctors called the plaistered-up scratches wounds—and the bandaged Robinson, kneeling at the feet of the countess, rose up her accepted suitor. The needy gambler of yesterday was to-day the lord of a third of Durham, and the wretched nabob shivered over his nauseous glass of Bath water, while Stoney Robinson (now Andrew Bowes, Esquire, if you please) grinned, over the bottle of Burgundy he cracked with Parson Bates, on the way he had duped the rich widow of Grosvenor-square.

Airing himself for a time in the Park and at Ranelagh, holding his lovees among crowds of smiling parasites, who a week before would have let him die on a dung-hill, as the veriest leper of London, Stoney Robinson (for we have not the heart to surrender this delightfully appropriate name) then proceeded to the north to taste the full pleasure of his new wealth and power. It was the old story, Hogarth's *Scattergold*; the beggar on horseback, bent on the old ride to the old place. He was greedy for heaps of money at once to flourish and squander. Ruthless as death, and rapacious as the grave, he quickly set the axes of the workmen to fell the sumptuous woods of Gibside. That avalanche of trees that rolls from Bryan's Leap to the brink of the Derwent, this wretch did his best to sweep into a timber-yard. "No place but the king's dockyards," he chuckled, "could show such wood." But the fox had a brain of no real grasp after all; he overshot his mark as greedy rascals often do. He felled so much that the timber merchants were afraid of drugging the market, and would not purchase half of it, so the great trunks rotted in the Lady Haugh. Although at once mean and extravagant, sociable and tyrannical, his wealth won Stoney Robinson great influence in the county while it lasted. He got into parliament for Newcastle, and was promised support if eventually he stood for the county. At the very time he was trying (for already he had got involved) to coax loans out of bankers and rich friends, he gave parliamentary dinners at Grosvenor-square, or tried in Durham to outvie the old nobility of the north. He bought the Benwell estate of the Shafto family, and instantly mortgaged it deeply. With iron resolution,

and as black a heart as Satan ever rejoiced over, the man was not a prudent scoundrel. He gambled deeply, but seldom won, and mean as he was, the old treasure of the Bowes and Hiltons slipped through his thievish fingers like witches' money. Deeper and deeper this pirate sank into the slough of debt. He sold the Chelsea house with those rare exotics, which his wife had made her special boast. He locked up the family plate in his own coffers. He raised three hundred thousand pounds upon annuities. He insured the life of the countess over and over again for a year or two at a time. He gave lavish election entertainments at unfortunate Gibside. He kept open house, at the very time when his meanness prevented his purchasing a new carriage and decent horses. He wrote fulsome letters to a friend, from whom he borrowed, declaring, with his stained hand upon the vacuum where in most people there is a heart, he should never be happy till he was out of debt and had money by him, and the next day betted heavily on that green shaking bog, the turf. He flattered his banker, and at the same time, grinding his teeth, wrote to an acquaintance "that he would not leap on the man till he could bite him hard." He sold his best friend an estate cheap, but with such a claim upon it (at first concealed) that Bowes alone gained by the bargain.

At first, during the brief honeymoon, Stoney Robinson was all that was gallant and amiable to the duped countess. He compromised, by a heavy payment, an action for breach of promise commenced by the aggrieved nabob. Lady Strathmore, charmed at her conquest, sat down one honeymoon morning in her Chelsea boudoir, and, with a humming-bird's quill, on the most satin of couleur de rose paper, wrote some charming verses—at least so the toadies thought them—on her brave and chivalrous preserver—Stoney, the knight-errant, who had smitten Parson Bates, that cruel and false slanderer. Here is the romantic poem, with all its nonsense and bad grammar intact :

Unmoved Maria saw the splendid suite
Of rival captives sighing at her feet,
Till in her cause his sword young Stoney drew,
And to revenge the gallant wooer flew.
Bravest among the brave, and first to prove
By death or conquest who best knew to love!
But pale and faint the wounded lover lies,
While more than pity fills Maria's eyes.
In her soft breast where passion long had strove,
Resistless sorrow fixed the reign of love.
"Dear youth," she cries, "we meet no more to part;
Then take thy honour's due—my bleeding heart!"

The sham duel took place on January

the 13th, 1777. On the 17th of the same month the melting widow was married at St. James's Church, Westminster, to her gallant and convalescent champion. For the present the very soul of honour, pure, refined, delicate, Stoney neglected nothing that would please his bride. Soon after their marriage he wrote a letter of graceful apology to his angry mother-in-law, Mrs. Bowes, of Paul's Walden, in Hertfordshire. In this letter, with graceful humility, this modern Tartuffe said: "Deeply impressed with the sense of the impropriety that may appear to you of my conduct, I wish to atone for that breach of duty, and to ask your pardon, under the promise of dedicating the remainder of my life to the honour and interest of your daughter and her family. My grateful heart will make me her faithful companion, and with unremitting attention I will consult her peace of mind, and the advantage of her children."

After all, what did it matter to Stoney Robinson what he promised now the bird was in the cage, now the springe had closed, now the steel fetter lock was round the thin, white wrist, and only law or death could remove it. It was only a sheet of paper less, and his own frank carried it. The two tempers soon clashed; indeed, his life of ceaseless profligacy would have exasperated any woman, however fond, however indifferent. At first he swore at her only; soon he began to threaten and beat her, and subject her to every humiliation malice and contempt could frame or invent. It was now that in anticipation of the struggle that was sure, as he knew, to come, the rascal hit upon one of the most subtle forms of cruelty that ingenious villany ever shaped. He actually forced his miserable wife to write a book of the grossest description, called the Confessions of the Countess of Strathmore, and professing to be a revelation of her life before their marriage. This he held in terrorem, a weapon ready, as Mr. Howitt says, for her throat if she ever sought the protection of the laws. He kept this book, like a talisman, under his pillow by night, and used scraps of it by day, to alarm or persuade enemies or friends with whom he came into contact. He carried it with him, like a palladium, wherever he travelled; as Jesse Foot says, he "hugged it to his bosom, and brooded over it with a rancorous rapture."

A year or two of this death in life, and the countess became an altered woman. She grew pale and nervous, silent and moody,

and always looked anxiously at her husband before she dared reply to the simplest question of social intercourse. One of his favourite forms of giving pain to this broken-spirited woman was bringing home to meals farmers' daughters he had seduced, and whom he loaded with trinkets in the presence of the woman, whom they treated with brazen and ignorant indifference. To his wife he denied all pleasure: the opera, the music party, the flower show, all the delights of her early life, were closed to her. To use the quaint but confused language of Mr. Jesse Foot, "Her person, accustomed only to distress and confinement, found no alleviation of the bitterest sorrow. Mind and body jointly submitted to receive the pressure which Bowes, like a mangle, daily rolled upon them."

But Stoney Robinson had more victims to lure into his den. If he could only get the countess's five children into his hands, he could then better torment their guardians, and bend their mother to his wishes. The sons he despaired of netting, but the two eldest daughters, Lady Maria Jane and Lady Anna Maria, seemed not quite unattainable. To beguile them he now assumed his blandest and most sympathetic aspect. He affected to be alarmed about the decay of his unhappy wife's health, and by her incessant pining for her children. A continuance of these detestable stratagems did indeed at last draw to the house one of the daughters. The other escaped, entirely owing to the firmness and prudence of the guardians. She had been allowed to go to the dangerous house to see her mother, whom Stoney Robinson declared, upon his honour as a gentleman, was all but dying. She was snatched from her attendants, but they, throwing up the windows, raised such a speedy and unappeasable alarm, that the child was reluctantly restored. With the other child the father fled to Paris, dragging the countess with him. The black scoundrel knew the human heart, had studied it like an instrument; his favourite stratagem was to place women and children before the front ranks of his attacking force. A long legal correspondence ensued after his flight. He endeavoured in vain to soften the iron heart of the Court of Chancery by hypocritical lamentations and crocodile tears; but, to the intense delight of her mother, was compelled at last to restore the young lady to her rejoicing guardians. In this cause he employed three of the greatest lawyers of his day, Erskine, Law (after-

wards Lord Ellenborough), and Scott (afterwards Lord Eldon), but all in vain; truth, reason, and humanity were against the special pleaders.

The story now begins to darken. With still some faint courage left, the countess, like a frightened deer driven to bay, resolved on one desperate leap for life. She determined at all risks to try and escape from the monster who had tied her up to die. He and his creatures kept remorseless and sleepless watch; but one day when Stoney Robinson went to dine with a Captain Armstrong, in Percy-street, they forgot to guard her close. One of the female servants, whom Robinson had not corrupted, had compassion for her unhappy mistress. The countess, like a frightened bird, flew at once to the open door of her cage. The male servants were lured away on mock errands. Her special turnkey was sent to the library for some novels for the countess to read in her husband's absence. She carefully locked the doors after her, to conceal her flight as long as possible, then the two trembling women crept, muffled, out of the house, and got undiscovered into Oxford-street, where at last they met a hackney-coach. They had a narrow escape. Robinson had rushed back on the news of the escape, and was in full cry after them; indeed, just as they passed Berners-street, they saw him in a hackney-coach, nearly mad with excitement, his hatless head thrust out of the window. Luckily he did not see them; but the sight of that Gorgon head so frightened the countess, who was worn and weak, that she fell into hysterics, and could hardly be persuaded for a time that she was safe and out of the villain's grip.

She was driven straight to Mr. Shuter, a barrister, in Cursitor-street, and an apartment was at once taken for her in Dyer's-buildings. Bowes soon tracked out her humble retreat, but not before the injured woman had exhibited articles of the peace against him in the Court of Queen's Bench, for the ill-treatment of her person, and was put under the protection of the court. How could Robinson be staved off by law or justice? He instantly took lodgings in the same street as the countess, ready to swoop down on her. To his disreputable house in Grosvenor-square flocked spies and base agents of all kinds ready for hire. He cried aloud for justice in the Court of Chancery and the King's Bench, and bought off all the unfortunate women whom he had victimised, and who came

to earn money by helping the countess to a divorce.

The countess had fled in such frightened haste from her tormentor and slow murderer, that she had left her jewels and all her valuables. She, therefore, with the utmost pain and mortification, had to press forward the divorce, and to oppose to the sham confessions forced from her, "beatings, scratchings, bitings, pinches, whippings, kicks, imprisonments, insults, provocations, torments, mortifications, degradations, deceptions, lies, starvation, force, and tyranny." All this time, Stoney Robinson tracked her half-hopeless fittings from obscure lodging to obscure lodging, as the kite follows the screaming chicken. At last, when she removed to rooms in Bloomsbury-square, he resolved on what Mr. Howitt appropriately calls "a grand coup de main." He determined to corrupt the constable whom the court had appointed to guard her. The man's name was Lucas, and he was highly respectable and above ordinary bribes. Bowes saw this at once, so he got at him by a stealthy flank movement. He visited the man's wife and family, gave them money, and read the Confessions to them with tremulous and deprecating voice. One of the children was ill; he nursed it daily, and gave it the medicines with his own hand. The mother began to say to herself, "It is a shame such a man should be so used by his wife. He is mild as a lamb, and as generous as a prince." She half convinced, half compelled her husband to help Robinson, and from that moment they became the mere creatures of his will. The abduction was soon planned.

For some weeks previous his spies and agents hung about the marked house in Bloomsbury-square, and followed Lady Strathmore's carriage sometimes in hackney-coaches, sometimes on foot. The countess was not altogether ignorant of this, but still not more alarmed than usual, as she had employed Lucas, in whom she confided, never to be far from her carriage.

On Friday, November the 10th, 1786, the trusty Lucas inquired as usual of the unsuspicious coachman what time his lady was going out, and was told to be ready between one and two in the afternoon. At the time named Lady Strathmore drove to Mr. Foster's, a shop in Oxford-street, taking with her for company Mr. Farrer, a brother of her solicitor, and Mrs. Morgan, her maid. Before they had been five

minutes in the shop she was alarmed by some of the ill-looking men she had seen hanging about Bloomsbury-square following her into the shop. She instantly withdrew to an inner room and locked the door, requesting Mr. Foster at once to go secretly and procure assistance, in case force should be threatened. Mr. Foster had scarcely gone before the cruel plot suddenly matured to action. The trusted constable came, tapped at the door, and, giving his name, was instantly admitted. The countess shuddered when the rascal at once told her that her ladyship was his prisoner; that he was sorry, but still he must do his duty, as a warrant had been put in his hands; but that as her ladyship was to be taken straight to Lord Mansfield's, at Caen Wood, there was no doubt her enemies would be soon foiled, and she would be taken under his lordship's protection. These were Robinson's words; he knew just how she would think, just how the poor frightened, half-maddened creature would infallibly act under such hopes. She immediately consented to get again into her coach, Mr. Farrer accompanying her.

That was all Stoney Robinson wanted. The moment the carriage-door was slammed her servants were dismissed by a pretended order from her, and a gang of Robinson's men, well armed, surrounded their prey. At the bottom of Highgate Hill the arch fiend himself started up, quietly displaced Mr. Farrer, and took his seat by the side of his scared wife. Then the coachman drove furiously on the road to the north. At Barnet fresh horses were put to, and a post-chaise and four, with more accomplices, was waiting to follow and bar pursuit. The windows of Robinson's coach were already broken, and the lady was pale and weeping, but no one interfered to save her. The next day at noon a servant of Robinson's arrived at the Angel Inn, Doncaster, one hundred and ninety-five miles from London, and ordered horses to be ready. In half an hour the splashed post-chaise arrived with the prisoner and her torturer. Mr. Woodcock, the landlord, handed some cakes to Robinson for the lady. Then on they dashed northward. At Bransby Moor the countess alighted, and rested for a few minutes, guarded by the wretch who watched her like a hawk. At Ferry Bridge she walked up and down the inn garden, but Robinson waited immovable at the garden door. All this toilsome and rapid journey her husband had been trying to

induce her by cajolery, threats, and force, alternately, to sign a paper, promising to stop all the proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Court, and to live with him under the name and character of wife; but the poor creature was at bay at last; she refused, unconditionally refused. Then the devil threw off the mask; he struck her on the face and body with his clenched fists, till the blood sprang from her poor bruised flesh and quivering livid lips. When she attempted to cry out he gagged her by thrusting his handkerchief in her mouth. He then beat her with the heavy chains and seals of his watch; and, at last, as she still remained firm, held a loaded pistol to her head, and threatened to blow out her brains if she did not instantly consent to sign the paper. But nothing shook her resolution, for she had tasted freedom, and she had still hope of a rescue.

At Streatlam Castle, in Durham, the man's passion grew maniacal and murderous, as she still refused to condone or to act in any way as his wife, or the manager of the family. In a fit of frenzy he pulled out the pistol, bid her say her prayers, and with a hand trembling with passion, presented the pistol to her head. But that poor weak woman was iron now. She hated him so, that death seemed better than being chained for life to such a corpse of dead and corrupt love. Seeing her immovable, the coward thrashed her cruelly, and left her locked up for a whole day. When he returned and asked her more calmly if she was yet reconciled to a dutiful domestic life, she answered with some sharp retort. He then grew apparently mad, and pulling out his pistol, told her to fall on her knees, and say her last prayers. It seemed then that the end had really come. The poor woman, accordingly fell on her knees, repeated a short passionate prayer, and told him to fire, but he turned away sullenly.

Still great and imminent as the danger of murder was, there was hope. The country was up and clamorous. An angry crowd began to gather round the castle, and insist on seeing her. With his usual satanic cunning, Robinson dressed one of his servants as himself and another as the countess, and made them appear from time to time in friendly talk at the windows, to soothe and quiet the populace in the courtyard below. The stratagem succeeded, the people calmed down, and the sheriffs' officers sent to execute the attachment, served it on the masqueraders. In the meantime Bowes dragged the countess out

by a back-way, and, in the dark, brought her towards midnight to a little lonely cottage, where he spent the night threatening her, and beating her with rods. You might kill that woman now, but you would never bend her; she was stone. In the early morning he flung her behind him on a horse without a pillion, and carried her over wild and trackless heaths, covered with snow, to the house of an attorney, a creature of his, at Darlington. There he shut her up in a dark room, and holding a red-hot poker to her breast, which fear alone prevented him using to brain her, threatened her with a madhouse for life, unless she signed the paper, and came once more to his side. She was dumb, she was paralysed, but she was steel now and for ever to him. She defied his rage; she smiled at his threats. She could but die once. One blow more, and he could end the long dispute.

But Heaven has eyes, and God's lands stretch far. Help was near; a keen ear might even at that moment have distinguished the ring of approaching hoofs. That terrible day of her capture, Mr. Farrer had driven hard to London, winged by anger and pity, and had instantly made application to the Court of King's Bench, in order to effect a rescue. On Monday, November the 13th, two of Lord Mansfield's trustiest tipstiffs had posted off to the north. The constables were already scouring the country between Streatlam Castle and Darlington. Bowes was seen riding with his wife from that cottage at daybreak, flying with her over hedges and ploughed fields, going he scarcely knew whither, till in the final paroxysms of rage and despair, he would crush her dead under his feet. Labourers at work spied the wild rider, and cautiously hemmed him in; as he was about to be snatched at his bridle. Bowes presented a pistol to frighten him off. Just at that moment a constable in pursuit ran in, and, with a heavy hedge-stake, beat Bowes off his horse. The countess, seeing her husband unable to move, placed herself under the protection of the Perscus who had rescued her from this monster, whose enchantments had at last come to an end, and, with a pardonable exultation, bidding him farewell and reform, escorted by the delighted countrymen, she left the wretch soaked in his own blood, riding fast and gaily southwards on the first stage for London, free and once more happy.

On the 22nd, she appeared in the Court of King's Bench, and Mr. Law, her counsel,

moved "that she might exhibit articles of the peace against her husband, A. R. Bowes." These articles were read and signed, and an attachment immediately granted against the cowardly and defeated malefactor. On the 27th, Bowes was produced in court; he looked squalid and emaciated, and was with difficulty kept from fainting. He wore a soiled, drab great-coat, and a red silk handkerchief bandaged his mischief-working head. In the end the punishment fell on him heavy and swift, but not as deadly as the guillotine axe. He was fined three hundred pounds, imprisoned for three years in the King's Bench, being at the end of that time ordered to find security for fourteen years, himself in ten thousand pounds, and two sureties in five thousand pounds each. Lucas, the constable, was fined thirty pounds, with three years' imprisonment in Newgate, and the other four accomplices also received their justly-earned stripes. The countess, as might have been expected, very soon obtained a divorce.

The only revenge the countess took on the torturer of her life was to write an epitaph on him, bitter enough, but hardly equal to those lines which Arbuthnot burnt in upon the gravestone of the infamous Colonel Charteris; these she sent to the wounded man groaning and cursing in the purgatory of the King's Bench. The epitaph began:

• HERE RESTS •

Who never rested before,
The most ambitious of men,
For he sought not virtue, wisdom, nor
Science, yet rose by deep hypocrisy,
By the folly of some,
The vice of others,
To honours which Nature had forbade,
And riches he wanted taste to enjoy.

He was the enemy of mankind;
Deceitful to his friends,
Ungrateful to his benefactors,
Cringing to his superiors,
And tyrannical to his dependants.

He rose by mean arts
To unmerited honours,
Which expire before himself.
Passenger! examine thy heart
If in aught thou resemblest him.
And if thou dost,
Read, tremble, and reform!
So shall he who living
Was the pest of society,
When dead be, against his will,
Once useful to mankind.

Some villains are reserved for future punishment. This man at least suffered in this world. For two-and-twenty years Bowes mouldered away in prison, growing

daily more and more mean, hypocritical, and viperish. At first he flaunted in the state rooms of the King's Bench, then he was shut within the walls; for the last twelve years he lodged within the rules in obscure lodgings in St. George's Fields. His great passion was to become acquainted with all prisoners of rank, but many of these repelled his fulsome advances. His humour was of a cruel and brutal kind, and consisted generally in making his guests drunk by filling the kettle with which they made their grog with spirits and water. On one occasion he intoxicated a sponging visitor, floured his face, and filling his boots with water, left him at the table with a looking-glass before him, and lights burning. The sponge is not generally of a chivalrous nature, and within a fortnight, as Stoney Robinson had prophesied, the fellow came to dine again with the man who had made a fool of him.

As for Robinson's lawsuits for the recovery of property from the trustees of the Strathmore estate, they were interminable. He had many schemes to deceive the judges and the counsel; he could feign asthma, vomiting or spitting blood, and no one could swoon more successfully in court. He cheated his sister's husband, who guaranteed him annuities on his promise to leave him his Benwell estate, and, to crown all that cunning can accomplish, he actually swindled and fleeced a long series of London attorneys. Each of these acute gentlemen advanced him money for his lawsuits, till their purses one by one ran dry. The force of cunning can no further go.

He even secured another female victim. He seduced the daughter of a ruined country gentleman, then in the Bench, and by her he had five children. He kept her jealously locked up in solitude from 1787 till he died in 1809. At last, mean as he was, he took to drink. To the end he kept no servants, would not even buy brushes, but made his two eldest daughters gather up the dirt and dust in their hands. At last Satan sent for his useful son. Robinson left something to the countess's children; but it was only by the entreaties of Mr. Silas Foot, the surgeon, and after the tears of his children, that he could be induced to leave the countess a poor one hundred pounds per annum.

Surely of all the men who have ever persecuted and injured women, even by sword or flame, there never existed a greater torturer of the heart than this man. Well did Mr. Howitt close his careful sketch of

Stoney Robinson by Mr. Jesse Foot's bitter line of epitaph, "He was a villain to the backbone."

TWO SIDES OF A STORY.

GRETCHEN'S THIRD CHAPTER. HOW IT ALL ENDED.

THE next morning, however, when ready to quit my room, I found myself at liberty as usual. Mimi was unable to leave her bed, and I went straight to my father without waiting to be sent for by him. I explained to him how it was that I had stayed to nurse his wife, and told him that my letter to Ned had left the house that very morning. He heard me with great composure, which surprised me a good deal. I had expected violent reproaches and threats, but I met with nothing of the kind. He said that the worst had now come, that I had chosen to obey a scruple of conscience rather than be true to my father, and as the thing was done he would calmly await the issue. From Edward Lance's reply to my letter we should learn what he meant to do. He commended me for staying to attend upon his wife, and spoke some feeling words about her, as though he were sorry, and pitied her. I went back then to her bedside, and sat down to wait impatiently for a letter from Ned.

Some days passed, during which I felt a sore compunction for my conduct towards my father, a hatred of myself, and a great longing to see Ned in spite of all that had passed, and was to come. More days went over, and no answer came to that letter. More days still; and I began to feel a keen, terrible pain, greater than anything I had as yet suffered. I had not believed that Ned could have been willing to give me up without a regret. I had thought to be urged and reproached. I had wept over the imagination of Ned's grief at my loss. Now it was bitter to think that he could silently acquiesce in all that I had proposed; that he was so occupied in thinking of his inheritance that he could not even treat as a matter of importance the sad, sad farewell which I had sent him as the ending of our engagement. I wonder now, as I write, how I could ever have so judged him, but my reason was weakened, I suppose, by continued torture of mind. I yearned for even one kind word of farewell from his hand; and the days kept going and coming, and no letter ever came.

Weeks passed away. Mimi was unable to leave her own rooms, and I often met my father alone. He was very gentle with me, and repeatedly asked me if I had heard from Edward Lance. Every day my answer was given to him in a fainter voice, and with whiter lips. He seemed to pity me, I thought; and by-and-bye he quite left off questioning me.

The summer was coming on. The days grew long, and in the warmer weather Mimi was able to come down-stairs again, and we thought she was getting better. My father was attentive to her, and this seemed to surprise and gratify her greatly. Friends came to visit her, for she was a favourite with all who knew her. We had some gay evenings when a few friends met at the Sycamores, and we had some music, or looked over some rare old drawings which Mr. Sutherland had lately bought. It would have been a pleasant time if one's heart had not been breaking; but I look back on it as part of a frightful dream.

It was during this time that I had a proposal of marriage from that agreeable Mr. Field whom I have mentioned before. He was a wealthy man, and important in the county, and he asked for what he wanted like one who did not expect to be refused. I could have imagined a woman very happy as his wife, but as for myself I knew that I could not marry any man unless he had the heart, and the mind, and the features of Edward Lance. My nature is not one that "gets over" things; and I knew that time would make no change. Mr. Field received my firm denial with amazement, and, unable to comprehend it, went to complain to Mr. Sutherland, whom he looked upon as my guardian.

And now, indeed, there was a not of difficulty cast around me. My father was, as I had feared he would be, delighted at this opening through which he could dispose of me so well, so safely, and for ever. During many weeks he strove with me so persistently that I thought he or I must die before the struggle would be over. But I would not yield; for soul and body were yet left to me, though Ned had given me up. I proposed to my father that I should change my name, and go very far away, so that I should not trouble him any more. Then I remembered that I had already done my worst with Ned, and wondered why my father was now so anxious to get rid of me. I could at all times do more than earn bread for myself, and he had not always been so careful about my

fate. The future solved this riddle, but at that time it puzzled me.

At last Mr. Field became satisfied that I was a mad woman, and went away mortified that he had ever thought of such a person as a wife. From that day forth all friendship was at an end between me and my father.

Every day I wondered what Ned could be doing. Was he spending all these months in collecting evidence to prove the fraud that had been practised on him, and might not any day's post bring tidings that the law had been set in motion against Mr. Sutherland? I heard nothing of all this as the summer days deepened. The outer world was a great silence to me, and the only spot of life in the universe was the Sycamores. Yet the life that it held was feeble and ghostly at the best. In the midst of the summer beauty and warmth, Mimi lay dying; creeping every day a little nearer to her grave. My father seemed restless and troubled, watchful and fearful, and never straying far from home. I scarcely ever saw him, being quite engrossed with Mimi. I had long known well that I should have to nurse her to the end.

One evening I was sitting by her as usual; her eyes were closed, and I thought she was asleep. Suddenly I found her looking at me.

"I have a strange idea troubling my mind," she said. "May I speak?"

"Speak at once, Mimi," I said. "No matter how strange it is."

"When I am dead, you must not marry Mr. Sutherland."

I started, and looked at her in amazement.

"Not because I am jealous," she added, "but because you would not be happy."

"Dear Mimi," I said, "tell me what has put such a fantastic notion into your head."

"Is it fantastic?" she asked. "Well, there is no strange idea you could imagine that has not passed through my mind about you and Mr. Sutherland. They have all faded away, except one, that keeps its place. I have been thinking that perhaps he had asked you to marry him, before he knew me, and that you refused him. And I think that when I am dead perhaps he will ask you again. And you have broken off with your lover, though you would not marry Mr. Field. And Mr. Sutherland is much altered, much improved. And the Sycamores is a pretty home."

"Mimi," I said, "listen to me!" and I took her hand and held it. "You will believe what I say, for I take God to witness that I speak only the truth. Your husband never had at any time the faintest wish to marry me. Such a marriage would be impossible, even if you had ceased to live. Are you content?"

"Quite content," she said; and then she turned away and went to sleep. For a moment I had felt tempted to tell her the whole truth; and I should have done so at all risks, if she had shown any further curiosity or uneasiness. But she seemed perfectly at peace, and she was very near her death, and why trouble her with a long tale of grief and wrong?

Some time before this I had begun to notice a great change in my father. He had not the satisfied calm which I had wondered at for awhile, and he had also lost the fearful, impatient manner, and the nervously watchful gleam that had of late made one afraid to meet his eye. He showed a tenderness to Mimi that greatly soothed her last hours, and I fancied that he seemed to shun me with a kind of shame. Whenever I had an errand to him I found him pacing thoughtfully up and down his library, with his hands behind his back, and his eyes on the ground, and with a new expression on his face, which I know not how to describe. Some days before her death, Mimi and he had a long and agitating conversation. I met him coming from her room, looking crushed and grief-stricken, and with traces of tears on his face. I tried to offer him comfort, but he put me aside and passed on. A few days after this Mimi died in my arms.

Now indeed did my term at the Sycamores seem drawn out to its very end; but I could not leave the place, while it held what had been Mimi. I did all that was needful, and then I prepared to go away. I wrote to Mrs. Rice to expect me in London; and on a certain evening I went down to the study to say good-bye to my father.

I had not spoken to him since before Mimi's death. He had shut himself up, and I had not ventured to go near him. He was sitting at the table with his head between his hands, and when he raised his face he looked aged and haggard, feeble and broken-hearted. He looked a poor old man, very lonely and afflicted. I went up to him and stood at his side, and burst into tears.

"Don't cry," he said, "don't cry. I have cost you grief enough. You are right."

to go, and I will not keep you with me. You are a good woman, Gretchen, and I have been a very bad man. Things are different with me now from what they were a few weeks ago. I am not going to vex you any more. Perhaps, in some days hence, you will have reason to think a little better and a little worse of me, than you have yet had reason to do. Good-bye now, child, and be as happy as you can."

I did not understand him. He put me away from him quickly, as if he wanted to get rid of me. I went, weeping, and travelled sadly up-stairs to put on my bonnet for my journey. But something rose in my heart and declared that I must not go. My father was ill and in trouble, and he needed some one to care for him. I put off my bonnet again, and hastened back down the stairs to make an appeal to him that he would allow himself to be comforted. Descending thus, bent on my errand, I heard a commotion in the hall, and saw a knot of policemen below at the study-door. I hurried on and gained the hall, just as the study-door opened: which it did before I had time to ask a question. I saw my father come out and stand on the threshold, and two of the men seize him and put handcuffs on his wrists. It all passed in a moment. My father looked dumbly from one face to the other; struggled to speak, moaned, and fell.

I flew to his side and pushed away the men. They were sorry enough, but said they were forced to do their duty. I was crazed with misery, and scarce knew what I said or did. God forgive me. I thought that Ned had done this thing.

We carried him to bed, and the doctors who had been so familiar to the house of late, were now recalled to pass their sentence upon its stricken master. They said that Henry Sutherland would never speak again. And he never did. He had got a fit of apoplexy, and he died the next day.

Never shall I forget the utter horror and loneliness of the week that followed his death. I was alone in the vast house, amidst tenantless rooms, with black draped domestics creeping silently about me. I seemed to live in a nightmare, from which I struggled to waken, even to the hard, bitter reality of my future daily life. On the day, after the funeral the lawyer desired to speak with me. Poor Mimi had left me many of her pretty things that she was so fond of, from her brilliant piece of tapestry down to the diamond buckles of

her dainty little shoes. I learned from this lawyer one fact, which made me more glad than I had ever thought to be again. He told me that Mr. Sutherland's arrest had been made for some fraud of which he was said to have been guilty very early in his life. And thus I knew that Ned had had no hand in it.

"The heir has been communicated with," said the lawyer, who probably thought I might be eager to get possession of those articles in the house which now belonged to me. "The heir, Mr. Lance, has been travelling abroad, and our letters have scarcely reached him as yet. Till he appears of course nothing can be touched."

I did not notice that he called Edward the heir, or I might have asked the reason why. It seemed only natural that people should speak of him as master at the Sycamores. He had long held this position in my mind. I took it for granted that Ned had already urged his claim, and made known his wrong; but I could not think on the matter, still less could I ask a question.

I got away from the Sycamores as quickly as I could. Mrs. Rice was waiting for me at the London terminus, and was very kind and motherly with me, so that I am still very grateful to her. She had made a neat little sitting-room very comfortable for my reception, but I had been better anywhere else, for it was the same room in which I had been so happy long ago.

There, in Mrs. Rice's hands, I was attacked by the first real illness I ever had in my life. It was a low fever, which kept me suffering for many days, and left me weak and helpless as a child. Mrs. Rice did not venture to ask a question about Ned, though it was evident she was anxious to know why he did not appear. But having made a mistake once she was careful not to make another. When I was able to leave my bed she tucked me up in her great arm-chair by her fireside, and rummaged an antediluvian bookcase for literature to amuse me. Sitting there, trying to be patient, I felt myself to be the feeblest and loneliest little atom in the world.

And having thus arrived at the lowest depths of my sorrow, there burst upon me suddenly the great wonder and happiness for which I was in no way prepared. Three evenings I had spent sitting in Mrs. Rice's arm-chair, and on the fourth I had got up, and staggered to the table, quite proud

that I was strong enough to pour out a cup of tea. But my pride was premature, for a sudden knock at the hall-door made my hand shake so that I spilled the tea over the tray, in trying to raise it to my lips. There was something in the sound that made my heart beat hard. If it had not been Ned's hand that had produced that noise, then it was cruel in Mrs. Rice's lodgers to have learned the trick of his knock. But I had time for no other thought before Ned was in the room.

"Gretchen, Gretchen!" he cried, "oh, my poor love!" And he took me in his arms, and moaned over me like a tender-hearted child over a half-drowned kitten. He was frightened at my haggard face, and I was almost as frightened at his; for he, too, looked as if he had been ill. I could not remember at the moment what had been the barrier between us, and whether I belonged to him or not. Had he been cruel to me, or I had been cruel to him? I only knew the joy of being well loved once more.

But by-and-bye all the story was unfolded. He had never received that letter, the writing of which had cost me so much pain. For a long time my letters to him had been short and strange, and suddenly they had ceased altogether. He had written me very often, imploring me to write, if only to explain the meaning of my silence. At last he had said, in making a last appeal, that if it could wring no answer from me, he would believe I had ceased to love him, and had resolved to shake him off. He heard, at the same time, from an acquaintance who had been in Hopshire, that I was well, and about to be married immediately to Mr. Field. Unable to believe all this without hearing from my lips, he had at once set out for Hopshire, determined to see me. Approaching the house, through the trees he had espied me walking on the lawn with Mr. Field. It was on one of those occasions when that gentleman had used all his eloquence to persuade me to alter my decision as to his suit. But the picture, as Ned saw it, had been too much for his sorely-tried faith. He had turned away at once, thankful that he had not humbled himself unnecessarily. In another week he had been on his way towards Rome. Thither, very lately, a packet had made its way to him.

"Here is the sequel," he said, and placed this packet in my hands. I opened it wondering, and found first that wretched letter to which I have so often alluded, and next a heap of others written by Ned to me. Lastly, there was one from my father, which explained all the mystery of the rest. This last was to Ned, written only two days before my father's death.

"All my mind seems to have changed within the past few weeks," he said, "and in proof of this I send you the enclosed. I kept back all these letters. I have divided you and Gretchen, but I will no longer stand between you. I acknowledge the fraud which I have practised upon you. Come now and take possession of all that is lawfully yours. For Gretchen's sake, I believe you will not expose me." There was much more in the letter, but this was the substance of it. It was a strange fact, that after having written this letter he had made a will in which he left everything to Edward Lance. By this, it would appear, that he must have had some foreshadowing of his own sudden death. Thus, Ned succeeded quietly as heir to the property which, in justice, ought long since to have been his; and the world knew none of our secrets, and never need know them now.

And thus all the mystery was cleared up. I understood at last the meaning of my father's words, "You will think worse of me, and better of me, than you have yet had cause to do." We sat in silence, clasping each other's hands.

We live now with our children at the Sycamores. Time has worn away all sad recollections, and ours is the happiest home in all England. We do not forget our Fan, and we often speak together about Mimi. We sometimes hear from Kitty. She has married a French count, and leads a very pleasant life. Our greatest regret is that my poor father did not live long enough to let us know his better self. And we thank God for one another.

On the 8th of July will be commenced a New Serial Story, entitled

CASTAWAY.

By the Author of "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c., which will be continued from week to week until completed.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN
PORT," &c. &c.

PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER I. AFTER MESS.

"Just fetch my coat out of the commercial-room, Sam, and get my luggage ready for the bus—I am going by the eight-forty-five."

"Is this yours, Mr. Baines?" said the person addressed, the boots of the hotel, pointing to a number of queer-looking packages wrapped in leather, and secured with huge straps and buckles, which were lying in the passage of the George Inn at Cheeseborough.

"Yes," replied Mr. Baines; "you ought to know, you have seen them often enough."

"Well, do you know," said the boots, slowly, "I dare say you may think it odd, but there is a good deal of luggage of the same pattern as is brought to this house. The fancy line ain't what it was, Mr. Baines."

"You are right, Sam," said Mr. Baines, "it's overdone, it's—Hullo! what's that?" he cried, as a roar of laughter rang through the house. "Got a public dinner going on, Sam?"

"No, not exactly," said Sam. "Yeomanry's out, and a fine out they are making of it. There is six hundred of them in one place and another up and down the town; and there has been a review to-day, and the officers has been dining here afterwards. That was them hallooing just now."

"Yeomanry, eh!" said Mr. Baines. "I don't hold much with yeomanry, Sam; my idea is that the proper way to defend this country—"

But Mr. Baines was compelled to post-

pone his intention of imparting his notions for the national defence, as at that moment the omnibus drove up, and seeing in it a representative of the rival house of Peto and Wiggins, Mr. Baines hastened to climb the box with the view of learning all about the intended movements of his brother commercial.

Meanwhile the stout major, whose jokes, principally levelled against himself, had evoked the laughter thus commented upon, had brought his speech to a humorous conclusion, and sat down amidst the applause of his comrades. The disinclination for more oratory, and the desire to smoke, now impelled most of the officers to push away their chairs and adjourn to the billiard-room; no one, however, ventured to move, until the president, Lieutenant-Colonel Goole, a tall, handsome man, wearing the Crimean and Indian medals, had risen from his seat, and bidding his brother officers good-night, and bowing right and left, had left the room.

Then all restraint was thrown off, everybody began talking to everybody else, caps and shakoes were hastily donned, and the doors being thrown open by the waiters, the crowd of young men surged into the passage, and thence into the billiard-room, while some, more highly favoured than the rest, sought the snuggerly behind the bar, and there entertained themselves with flirting with the good-looking barmaids.

Only two men remained in the room where the dinner had been held. Both were middle-aged, but one had retained his figure, and a certain unmistakable soldier-like smartness, while the other, close verging on corpulency, unbuttoned his jacket and flung himself back in his chair, with an air of one accustomed to subordinate everything to his sense of personal comfort.

His companion watched these proceedings with a certain amount of curiosity, and when they were completed said, with a laugh:

"By Jove, Jack, this'll never do! If you go on like this you will have to pay three hundred pounds for a charger to carry you. This all comes of selling out early, and going in for domesticity and gentleman-farming."

"Upon my word I believe you are right, Cleethorpe. I must ride close upon sixteen stone now, and it seems to me that I am putting on flesh every year. I think you are wrong about the selling out though. I could not have stood that confounded "stables" much longer, and as for the domesticity, I was meant to be a home bird, and not a battered old London rake like you."

"Exactly," said Captain Cleethorpe, lighting a cigar and handing his case to his friend; "exactly; the only wonder is to me that you still remain in this regiment."

"Well, you see, Cleethorpe," said his companion, slowly expelling his smoke, "there is nothing that I know of so good that you cannot have a little too much of it, and I find that to come down here to see you, my old chum of so many years' standing, and to talk with the colonel, who is a deuced nice gentlemanly fellow and a man of the world, and to mix with these young fellows, who show me what the present generation is like, does me good by rubbing off the rust——"

He stopped as the door opened, and a young man entered the room. A man a little above the middle height, and apparently not more than eighteen years of age, with a small and singularly well-shaped head and handsome regular features. So handsome was he, with his dark blue eyes and dark chestnut hair, which curled in natural and most unusual ripples over his head, that even men, who are generally accustomed to scorn anything like personal beauty in one of their own sex, were fain to admit that he was good-looking. Artists found his lips too full, and his forehead a little too narrow, but principally admired the shape of his head, and the way in which it was joined to his throat, which they pronounced classical and Byron-like, though they complained that the delicate tints of his complexion were too essentially feminine.

There was, however, nothing effeminate in the young man's manner. He strode into the room without swagger indeed, but

with perfect manly ease, and walked up to the far end of the table where he had been sitting during dinner.

"Come to hunt for my cigar-case," he said, as he passed his two brother officers; "must have dropped it under the table. Oh, here it is. Not coming to the billiard-room, Captain Cleethorpe? Do come, there is great fun going on; just going to get up a pool, Captain Norman, and must have you; capital thing for you after dinner. I'll be your player and take care you have plenty of exercise in walking after your ball." And before either of them could reply, he had laughed and quitted the room.

"That's a cheeky youth," said Captain Norman, looking after him, "cheeky, but deuced good-looking. One of the new lot, isn't it? Which; not Travers?"

"No," said Cleethorpe. "Travers is the great hulking fellow that sat within two of you just now; this lad's name is Heriot. His father is an old army man, now a major-general and a K.C.B., who has been out in India all his life, and has just retired from the service. Goole is an old chum of his, which accounts for the lad being with us, though I think I understood he is going into the regulars."

"The cub is deuced good-looking," said Captain Norman, "but he'll want a good deal of licking into shape."

"I don't think that," said Captain Cleethorpe; "he is only a boy, you see, and cheeky as most boys are, but his manners are generally pretty enough. The sort of boy I think I should be proud of," said the captain, slowly puffing at his cigar. "I wonder what Sir Geoffry will think of him? The lad hasn't seen his father, he tells me, since he was a baby."

"What was it I heard about this old Heriot?" said Captain Norman; "something, I know; a tremendous martinet, wasn't he?"

"Yes," said Cleethorpe; "when I saw him out in India he was a strict disciplinarian and a first-class soldier. Kimandine Heriot they used to call him out there, from some wonderful exploit of his in either attacking or holding—I forget which—some pass during the Sikh war. But Goole, who, as I say, knows him very well, was telling me some other things about him the other day. It appears when he was last at home he married a goodish-looking woman with money and position, and that sort of thing, and everybody thought he would go on the retired list; but he didn't. After some little time he

went out to India again, leaving her behind him, and she and this boy lived together till she died, about ten years ago, and since then he has been educated in France. That's what Goole told me."

"Devilish interesting story," said Captain Norman, who was very nearly asleep, and roused himself with a start. "Now let's go and have a pool." And he pushed aside his chair, and stretched himself as he rose.

"All right," said Captain Cleethorpe, rising at the same time; and the two officers walked off together.

CHAPTER II. IN THE BILLIARD-ROOM.

"NICE atmosphere this," said Captain Cleethorpe to his companion, as he opened the door of the billiard-room, and walked into a perfect vapour-bath of tobacco smoke.

"Yes," said Captain Norman, waving his hand to and fro before him, in the vain attempt to clear some of the smoke away; "rather glad I am not going home to-night—it clings about you so confoundingly, and the smell of stale smoke is the only one thing that Mrs. Norman makes a row about. She don't mind it fresh, but hates it when it is stale."

"Ah!" said Cleethorpe, "then it won't do for you ever to bring her to see me at the Bungalow; our parson's wife tells me my place smells just like the inside of a pipe, and she ought to know, for the padre can never put his sermon together on a Saturday without his meerschau in his mouth. It's clearing off now a bit, or we are getting accustomed to it. Let us see who are here."

The billiard-room at the George was a very large one, containing two tables—one at either end, and flanked all round the wall by stout horse-hair seats. Billiards were an institution in Cheeseborough; the town had produced one of the most celebrated professional players; and no matter what might be the season of the year, the room at the George was always well filled. The town itself was split into two political parties, hating each other with undying animosity, and keeping up their antagonism not merely at election times, or other periods of political excitement, but throughout the whole year. Each party had its head-quarters; the Liberals at the George and the Conservatives at the Royal, and all banquets, balls, fancy fairs, and public meetings of any kind in which the

leaders of either party were interested, took place at one or other of their respective houses.

A Liberal elector of Cheeseborough would as soon have thought of smacking his lips over a glass of senna prepared for him by Mr. Tofts, the chemist, as of whetting his appetite with sherry and bitters at the Royal. A Conservative, if he could have imagined himself ordering such a draught, would not have been surprised to find death in the soda-and-brandy mixed for him by the barmaid at the George. But there was no billiard-room at the Royal, and as the game of billiards was a necessity both for Conservatives and Liberals, the billiard-room at the George was looked upon as a kind of neutral ground where they might meet together in friendly union, and where any reference to politics was rigidly tabooed. As happens not unfrequently, some of the keenest local politicians were the most energetic supporters of the game, and it was to their credit that they met night after night, without ever permitting themselves even a reference to the subjects, which they discussed so acrimoniously at all other times and places.

On the evening in question the billiard-room was even more full than usual; both tables were occupied, the one with a game of pool, in which most of the officers, and some of the visitors who had been present at the officers' mess, were engaged, the other by a match keenly contested by four of the best players amongst the townspeople. All along the seats ranged round the wall were men in various lounging attitudes, watching the play, and discussing the merits of the players with perfect freedom, or talking over various occurrences of that day's review, at which most of them had been present.

"Goole's not here, I suppose?" said Norman, as they seated themselves at the upper end of the room; "at least I have not come across him yet."

"No," said Cleethorpe; "he cleared off for home at once; this sort of thing won't do for him."

"Don't he like tobacco smoke?"

"Oh, it isn't that a bit—like most old Indians, he's seldom without a cheroot in his mouth—but the fact is, Goole is a very strict disciplinarian, and, having passed the greater part of his life in the command of niggers and natives, he finds it difficult to understand this kind of material," said Cleethorpe, motioning with his cigar to

some of the yeomanry who were standing at the further table.

"He's like your old friend Heriot, that you were speaking of—a bit of a martinet?"

"Well, yes," said Cleethorpe. "He doesn't seem to understand that this is a quasi-volunteer service, and that these men, who give up a certain amount of their time and money—though I allow it is to them amusement—are not to be treated as mere privates in the Line. For instance, Goole would think it quite derogatory to sit in this room while men in the regiment were so far forgetting the respect due to him as to play billiards in his august presence."

"Perhaps the major thinks so too?" said Norman; "as he has taken himself off, and you are the senior officer left to us."

"The major has taken himself off because he has discussed one bottle of sherry and two bottles of claret, and makes it a rule never to take spirits after good wine," said Cleethorpe; "and, moreover, I do not intend my dignity as senior officer to prevent my enjoying myself. What do you say; shall we join the next pool?"

"No," said Norman, lazily. "I am tired after all that bumping about this morning; besides those young fellows make such a tremendous row. Let's talk to some of these yokels."

"Well, Mr. Martin," said he, turning to a stout man in a suit of dark grey, who was sitting next him; "were you at the review to-day?"

"I were, indeed, captain, and a main fine sight it was."

"How did you think your boy Tom looked, Martin?" asked Captain Cleethorpe. "I told you the riding-master would make something of that seat of his."

"Well, sir," said farmer Martin, "may be 'tis right in the military fashion to hold your heels down and turn your toes out, as if you were at dancing-school, and to jolt about in your saddle like one sack of flour in a large waggon; but that wouldn't do for cross-country work, captain; you must shorten your stirrup-leathers there."

"Ay, ay," said Cleethorpe, nodding. "By the way, didn't you say you wanted to speak to me this evening, Martin?"

"Yes, sir," said the old man, dropping his voice, and edging up confidentially towards Captain Cleethorpe. "It's about Mr. Travers, sir; that tall gentleman with the cue in his hand now."

"I see. Don't point; he's looking at you," said Cleethorpe.

"No offence, sir," said Martin. "But this Muster Travers, Tom's in his troop, sir, and he do worry Tom's life out."

"Stop, stop, Martin, I cannot hear this," said Captain Cleethorpe, hurriedly; "I cannot listen to complaints of this kind, at all events at such a time, and in such a place. If you have anything to complain of, or rather if your son has anything to complain of against Mr. Travers, he must bring it forward in a proper manner before the colonel. Did you hear that?" continued Cleethorpe, turning to his friend. "Not a very popular youth is Mr. Travers, I suspect."

"Ill-conditioned brute," said Captain Norman; "quarrelsome, cantankerous, low-bred lout; a complete specimen of what these young fellows call in their modern slang 'bad form.'"

"He must be a singularly bad lot," said Cleethorpe, "for he even managed to-day to have a row with the major, which I should have thought an impossibility. Hallo! what's that?" He pointed as he spoke to the other end of the room, where a little knot of men were gathered together.

Above the hum arising round them, a thick voice was heard saying, in coarse, common tones, "Can't you stand still? Always jumping about in that infernal French fashion, like a dancing-master! That's the second time you have spoiled my stroke!"

"That's that brute Travers, by the voice," said Norman, raising himself up on his elbow, the better to look at the group. "Whom is he speaking to in that charming, gentlemanly manner?"

"I cannot see clearly, but to Heriot, I should fancy, by that graceful allusion to the boy's French bringing up. Yes, it is. I hear Heriot's shrill voice in reply, and the strong foreign accent which always crops up when he's excited."

"That Travers is just the sort of fellow who would bully and swagger where he thought he could do so unchecked."

"He had better not try on such practices with Heriot," said Cleethorpe. "That young man has, I fancy, a spirit of his own. At all events, if he takes after his father, he would be one of the last to stand any—By Jove, they are at it again."

As he spoke, the little knot of men had formed again in the same place, and again Travers's voice was heard above the others, crying out, this time in louder and more passionate accents, "Keep back, sir, will you? You have spoiled my stroke again."

"That time I believe you did it on purpose."

"I didn't," in Heriot's shrill accents.

"You did."

"You're a liar!"

And immediately on the utterance of the words, there followed a dull heavy sound like a thud.

Travers had hit out, and caught Heriot on the cheek. Then with something that was more of a scream than an ordinary exclamation, Heriot was rushing in upon his adversary, when the bystanders laid hold of him, and Captain Cleethorpe rushing up, pushed his way through the crowd, and taking the lad by the arm, cried out, "Mr. Heriot, what is the meaning of all this?"

The boy, who was trembling with excitement from head to foot, stared at him vacantly for a moment, then said, incoherently, "He—I——" and then, to Cleethorpe's intense dismay, burst into a flood of passionate tears.

CHAPTER III. SITTING IN JUDGMENT.

EVERY morning at six o'clock, the bell in the turret of the stables attached to Lacklands, the pretty villa in the neighbourhood of Cheesborough, where Lieutenant-Colonel Goole resides, is rung for full five minutes, its shrill notes warning all those who hear it, and who are in the colonel's employ, that for them the new day has begun, and that they may at any time expect a visit from their master.

Mr. Boulger, who lives at Valparaiso Villa, the property adjoining Lacklands, and who made his money as a shipping agent at Birkenhead, objects very strongly to this bell, as do other residents in the neighbourhood. Colonel Goole receives their protests, which are sometimes made verbally, sometimes in writing, very politely, and in reply informs them, in a gentleman-like manner, and well-chosen terms, that he finds it necessary to make some such public announcement to the people employed by him, and that as an old Indian officer, accustomed to early rising, he considers the time he has fixed upon as the very latest at which work ought to be commenced. He himself, he avers, is always out of bed an hour before that time; and he might have added, is generally on the spot to see that the warning of the bell is not without its proper attention.

This morning, for instance, he has been through the stables, and looked over the occupant of each of his four stalls, has talked with the gardener about the coming

fruit crop, and consulted the shepherd as to the chances of fine weather; and now, just as the clock is striking seven, is striding about with a spud in his hand, devising certain alterations in the little slips of garden specially set aside for the behoof of his children.

The sunlight is even now sufficiently strong to dazzle his eyes as he looks up from the ground which he has been marking out, and he is compelled to shade them with his hand before he can make out the figure of a man, mounted on horseback, slowly approaching up the valley. Colonel Goole's eyesight had stood him in good stead on many occasions in India, and is good still. "Cleethorpe," he says to himself, after his survey; "Cleethorpe, on that leggy mare which he tried to make a charger of, but which he is quite wise in keeping for a hack. What can bring him here so early this morning? He's not a man to come out merely for the sake of a ride, or for breakfast; there must be something the matter in the regiment, I expect." And without relinquishing his hold of the spud, Colonel Goole started off down the hill to meet his brother officer.

The colonel's apprehensions were by no means set at rest by the captain's manner or appearance. Both, however, were practical men, unaccustomed to beat about the bush, or to attempt to mystify each other, and they came to the point at once.

"Good morning, Cleethorpe," said the colonel, when he was within earshot of his friend; "what brings you out here so early this morning; something has happened, I suppose?"

"You're right, sir," said Captain Cleethorpe, returning his salute, "something has happened."

"Unpleasant?"

"Very unpleasant!"

"I thought so," said the colonel, who had paused until his friend joined him, and who now turned round and walked by the horse's side; "please state shortly what it is."

"A row in the billiard-room of the George, last night."

The colonel's face darkened at these words, and he muttered, "Creditable that, by Jove! Any civilian mixed up in it?"

"No, sir; the quarrel was between Mr. Travers and Mr. Heriot."

"George Heriot?" replied the colonel, quickly; then shaking his head, "I'm sorry for that. Go on."

"Mr. Travers several times accused Mr.

Heriot of unduly pressing upon him, and spoiling his stroke in the game that was being played. At length, in the most marked and offensive manner, he accused Mr. Heriot of having pushed his arm."

"Well, Cleethorpe, well?"

"I regret to say, sir, that upon this provocation Mr. Heriot gave Mr. Travers the lie, and that then Mr. Travers struck Mr. Heriot a blow."

"A blow! struck George a blow?" said the colonel, stopping short, and looking up in horror at his friend. "By Jove, Cleethorpe, I am not a rich man, but I would have given five hundred pounds sooner than this should have happened. Who were present at this scene?"

"Many, sir; quite a crowd. Captain Norman and I, some dozen of the regiment, and several townspeople. One of the waiters and the marker were in the room, too, at the time; in fact, as you will see from the sequel, it is impossible to hush the matter up."

"Sequel! What, have you more to tell me?"

"I have, indeed, and the worst part of it."

"By Jove, Cleethorpe," said the colonel, who had fallen into deep thought, "Lord Okehampton will be furious when he hears of this; and if there's a meeting between these young men——"

"You may spare yourself the trouble of calculating the consequences of such a result, Colonel Goole; there will be no meeting."

"No meeting; that's by your management then, Cleethorpe," said the colonel, laying his hand on the captain's arm; "mutual retractations and apologies, eh? Cleverly managed, my friend."

"I don't deserve your compliment, and I regret that you have quite misapprehended the state of affairs. Mr. Travers distinctly refuses to retract anything that he has said, or to apologise for the blow given to Mr. Heriot."

"The deuce he does!" said the colonel, anxiously. "Well, then, Cleethorpe, the days of duelling are over, and rightly, too, I suppose, but—but a blow is a damned awkward thing; George Heriot can't sit down under that; he must have him out, sir, he must have him out!"

"That course has already been suggested to Mr. Heriot," said Captain Cleethorpe; "not by me, I am too old to be mixed up in such matters, but by some gentlemen more of his own standing in the regiment; but Mr. Heriot won't fight."

"What!" cried the colonel, so loudly and suddenly as to frighten Cleethorpe's horse; "won't fight?"

"He declines to ask Mr. Travers for satisfaction for the insult passed upon him. The young man is a favourite in the regiment, and his comrades hesitated before accepting his reply. It was pointed out to him that the insult offered to him was the grossest which could be passed upon any gentleman, and one which it was impossible for him to bear, and remain in the society of gentlemen. Mr. Heriot did not attempt to argue the point, he simply declined to send a challenge."

"But didn't he give any reason for this extraordinary conduct?"

"Not the least in the world. He said he had a reason which satisfied himself, but which he could not explain."

"This is very bad, Cleethorpe."

"Very bad indeed, colonel. As I have told you, I thought it better to keep clear of the affair last night, but this morning I went to the young man's room—I knew something of his father in India, as I told you—and tried to represent to him the position in which he had placed himself. It was of no use. He still refuses to take proper notice of Mr. Travers's blow."

"He must go, Cleethorpe," said the colonel, looking up at him.

"Not a doubt of that, colonel. The prestige of the regiment would be ruined if he were suffered to remain. Two or three men expressed that opinion to me last night, amongst them Norman, who is quiet and sensible, and by no means hot-headed. Indeed, I feel it myself."

"So do I," said Colonel Goole, quietly. "You mentioned his father just now; I don't know how I shall be able to break it to Sir Geoffry, and he intended to make a soldier of the lad."

"Ah!" said Captain Cleethorpe, patting his horse's neck, "it was only last evening that I was half inclined to deplore my bachelor state, and to wish that I had a boy like his, but now I cannot be too thankful for the immense amount of anxiety and possible misery that I have been spared."

"You're right. God help poor Sir Geoffry! He will suffer frightfully. I must write to him of course, and to Lord Okehampton, and that will be a very pleasant business for me, by the way, for it was principally on my representation that Okehampton gave the boy his commission. However, we will go in and get our break-

fast now, and afterwards I will write the letters, and you shall take them in with you and despatch them. Hard lines for Heriot—frightful hard lines for a man at the close of an honourable career to find his hopes blighted and his name shurred, and that by no fault of his own. By the way, does the young man know that he must go? He had better apply for leave until the matter can be formally arranged.”

“I settled that with him this morning, and am the bearer of his application. He knows, too, that he must give up all chance of entering the army.”

“How does he behave about that?”

“Very quietly, and not without a certain amount of dignity. In spite of all that has happened, there is something about the young man’s manner which one could never find in a coward. If one could only know his reason for this conduct!”

“That you say he distinctly refuses to give?” said the colonel.

“Most decidedly.”

“Then,” said the colonel, shrugging his shoulders, “we can only act on what is brought before us.”

“I suppose so,” said Captain Cleethorpe, repeating the shrug, and turning his horse’s head in the direction of the stables, while the colonel moved towards the house.

Their talk at breakfast was about other matters, and when the meal was finished, they adjourned to the little study, and there after much cogitation and many alterations, their joint labours produced the following letter:

Chesborough, May 18, 1868.

MY DEAR HERIOT,—I much regret to be compelled to announce to you some ill news, which I fear will affect you very deeply. Like most old soldiers, I am not a very good hand with the pen, but you will understand that it is not for any want of sympathy that I come at once to the point, and tell you that your son must send in his resignation of the commission which he holds in the Cheddar Yeomanry. It appears that last night he and another subaltern, a Mr. Travers, came to high words in a billiard-room in this town. Your son gave Mr. Travers the lie, and Travers retorted by a blow. I need not point out to you that after this, more especially as the affair took place in public, and in the presence of several of the townspeople, there was but one course to pursue. That course, however, Mr. Heriot, although it has been plainly pointed out to him, declines to take, and is content, as it seems,

to sit down patiently under the insult that he has received. Of course his continuance in the regiment under these circumstances is impossible; as henceforward all fellowship with his brother officers, or respect from the men, would be at an end.

I cannot tell you, my dear Heriot, knowing as I do your acute sense of honour, how deeply I sympathise with you under these unhappy circumstances; more especially as I am sure if George had only done what might have been expected of him, the matter could have been easily arranged. This Mr. Travers with whom he quarrelled is an underbred bully, and from what I have heard from Captain Cleethorpe, who was present at the row, and whom I think you know, I could easily have prevented matters from going to extremities. George’s refusal to notice the insult has, however, completely taken the matter out of my hands. He says he has a reason for his conduct which is quite sufficient for himself, but declines to impart it to any of us. He is prepared to send in his resignation, and I have no option but to advise its acceptance. I write to Lord Okehampton accordingly by this post. Again assuring you of my deep regret,

I am, my dear Heriot, sincerely yours,
MARKHAM GOOLE.

“There,” said Colonel Goole, folding up the letter, “this affair will either break the old man’s heart, or cause him to break his son’s spirit.”

“Do you think so?” said Captain Cleethorpe, doubtfully; “for my part, I look upon the first process as difficult, the last as impossible.”

HANDWRITING.

OF course *hand*-writing is meant. Where a man has the exceptional capability of writing with his toes, he must be placed in a separate list. That there have been such men, appears to be sufficiently established. For instance, in the library belonging to St. Paul’s Cathedral are two or three manuscript lines, purporting to be written by Roger Clarke with his foot, in 1568. In a manuscript of 1559, preserved in the British Museum, there is a written note to this effect:

Wretyn by me Xtopher Wells
wth my foot & nothyng els’.

And one Cæsar Decornet, who died at Lille in 1856, had the power of writing

well with a foot which was provided with only four toes.

One's handwriting is interesting for this among other reasons: that many persons believe in the possibility of judging the mental character of a man from his calligraphy. It was Shenstone, if we remember rightly, who said, "Show me a man's handwriting, and I will tell you his character." Cibber, in his life of Andrew Marvell, says: "The person whom he addressed was an abbot [abbé?] famous for entering into the qualities of those whom he had never seen, and prognosticating their good or bad fortune, from an inspection of their handwriting." William von Humboldt once said: "The handwriting always retains something characteristic of a man; but that of Goethe (who wrote a large flowing hand) was, I must confess, not one that could show his individuality. Schiller wrote, according to my judgment, a much more self-showing hand, peculiar to him." We can all of us say, each for himself, what kind of answer experience gives to this problem. We know *harum-scarum* men whose handwriting is small, neat, and careful; and slow, cautious, methodical men who write a large, bold, flowing hand. Ladies can hardly have any characteristic in this particular: seeing that the fashionable angular hand is pretty much alike in all.

Whether or not we can really determine a man's character by his handwriting, we can most certainly identify him by its means to a large degree. Not knowing a particular person, we may be able or unable to judge what sort of man he is by looking at his handwriting; but knowing both him and his writing, we have a much better chance of determining whether a certain letter or document may safely be attributed to him; or, not knowing him at all, we may judge whether two pieces of writing are by the same hand. Of course, the standard of comparison here is, good composition expressed in perfect calligraphy; the greater the departure from this standard, the more chance there is of identifying the writer, seeing that the departure may be made in an almost infinite number of ways. Good handwriting is not so much attended to now as in past days. The old writing-masters took so much pride in their work as to claim for it a rank among the fine arts. What they could do in this way may be seen in the title-pages of costly books; a writing-master, or professed penman, wrote out the whole title-page in full

size, and a copper-plate engraver then reproduced it. They prided themselves also on the power of writing a great mass of words within a small compass. Peter Hales, a famous penman in the time of Queen Elizabeth, wrote within the compass of a silver penny (in Latin) the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, a prayer for the queen, his posy, his name, the day of the month, the year of our Lord, and the year of the queen's reign; he inserted it, covered with crystal, in a gold ring, which Elizabeth wore on her finger; and he also presented a magnifying glass wherewith to read the tiny writing. Of the writing-masters, down to the end of the last century, some affected the classical or severe style, some the ornate or flowing, but all alike claimed to be artists; and one is said to have died of vexation, because the Royal Academicians would not make him one of their number.

Of course the most direct departure from good penmanship is an intentional production of bad; and this taste has at certain times been in fashion. Hamlet, as we know, says:

Some did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning.

The Humorist, in 1724, gave (with plenty of initial capitals) the following bit of satire: "The Badness of the Hand put me in Doubt at first, whether the Letter came from a Man of Wit or a Man of Quality." It is certain that, during a long period in the last century, good penmanship was regarded as vulgar and underbred.

Watch narrowly the habits of persons whom you know, in regard to peculiarities of calligraphy, and you will acquire much more power of identification than might at first appear attainable. The wits of the last century used to say that Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, carried her penuriousness to such a degree as to dispense with dotting her i's and crossing her t's, in order to save ink; but this smart bit of scandal comes to nothing when tested by the fact that such omissions are frequent in letter-writing, as a result of sheer carelessness. Making one sheet of paper serve for two, by crossing the writing up and down as well as from left to right, is often adopted in women's gossiping notes, though less frequently by men. It no doubt had its origin in the days when the postage of letters was charged per sheet instead of by weight, and was costly under any circumstances, especially for long distances; but

why the plan should be adopted now that postage is so low and paper so cheap; those must explain who indulge in it; at any rate, such a habit might tend to identify the writer of a particular letter. The same may be said of the use of the P.S. Jokes and skits without number have been pointed at fair letter-writers for their profuse use of postscripts; and theories have been advanced for explaining how it is that the most important part of a lady's letter often comes when the letter itself has been finished and signed with her name; but whatever fanciful explanations we may adopt, certain it is that some persons are more prone than others to this habit. Again; if one writer be more heedless than another, the fact is likely to show itself in omitted letters, or letters shaped like numerals—vices due to inattention, and not to real ignorance. Hence the well-known story of a merchant who bought up and transmitted no less than a ton of capers; having been misled by the careless way in which the word copper had been written by his correspondent. And hence the less known story, told in the Verney Papers, of a London merchant, who wrote to his agent abroad to send him 2 or 3 apes; the r was omitted, the o was made nearly as large as the numerals, and the quantity looked very much like 203; the agent wrote back to say that, in obedience to the commission, he had transmitted fourscore apes, and would send the rest by next ship. In proportion as a writer is liable to perpetrate little gaucheries of this kind, so will they form one among many means of guessing whether a particular letter is written by him. Another test is, a want of attention to syntax in composition; the spelling and the grammar may be correct, but the arrangement of the phrases and clauses into a sentence may be wrong; and the sense may either become nonsense, or be made obscure. The pronouns his, her, its, and their, are awkward tools to use, unless some circumspection be employed. A farmer, for instance, wrote to say that he and his neighbours were at a certain fair; and he added: "We had a splendid show of horned cattle. They were sorry you were not amongst them."

The experts or decipherers are constantly on the watch for these and other peculiarities; and the results are sometimes very striking. One of the most remarkable attempts ever made to pin a man down by means of his handwriting, is in connexion with that never-ending subject,

Junius. Readers of *ALL THE YEAR ROUND* need not be alarmed. We have no intention of going over the old ground in this place. The subject only interests us so far as it concerns handwriting.

Those who are known as the Franciscans, the believers in Sir Philip Francis, always contend that the handwriting of Junius was the handwriting of Francis disguised, and tends to corroborate the evidence obtained in other ways. Not very long ago the Honourable Edward Twistleton came into possession of two letters, one a note, and the other a copy of verses, addressed to Miss Giles, at Bath; the date was either 1770 or 1771. They were not signed, and the writing was not quite alike in the two cases; but circumstances led Mr. Twistleton to a belief that they were both written by Sir Philip, at that time Mr. Francis. They were placed in the hands of Mr. Netherclift, an expert, whose knowledge of writing is admitted as authoritative in courts of justice; he made each piece of paper bear witness against the other; he stripped the masks from both, and gave his verdict that both must have been written by the same person. Then came another battle of calligraphic deciphering. The note was in the handwriting of Junius, of which specimens are still preserved with great care; the verses were, although in a disguised hand, pronounced to be written by the same person as the note; Francis, by another train of reasoning, is believed to have sent the note to Miss Giles—therefore, was or was not Francis the one person who had written Junius's Letters, and the verses, and the note? Mr. Twistleton, to put his own decision to a further test, retained the services of another expert, Mr. Chabot.

Mr. Twistleton obtained access to original letters written to Francis by Mr. Tilghman, at the time when Francis was at Bath; also numerous letters written by Francis to his brother-in-law, or to his wife between the years 1767 and 1771; also the original manuscript Letters of Junius, now possessed, some by Mr. Murray, some by the British Museum. All were placed at the disposal of Mr. Chabot, who examined them with the hundred eyes of Argus multiplied a hundredfold: the eyes of the mind and those of the body. And what a result it is! A quarto volume containing two hundred pages of reports, with numerous fac-similes taken by photo-lithography from the veritable letters themselves—all to determine whether the same hand which

wrote Francis's letters also wrote the famed Letters of Junius!

Politicians and literary men may feel interested in knowing that Mr. Chabot answers this question in the affirmative. But, for the purpose of this article, it will suffice to notice the flood of light which Mr. Chabot throws on the mode of proceeding adopted by experts in their professional labours. To prove that two documents were written by the same hand, coincidences must be shown to exist which cannot be accidental; while to prove that two documents were written by different hands, discrepancies must be pointed out which cannot be accounted for by accident or disguise. Persons who wish to hide their handwriting, to make it seem as if written by some one else, generally resort to one of three methods, or two out of three, or all three: that is, to alter the slope, the size, or the fineness of the letters. But it is more difficult for a writer to maintain a disguise in their form; indeed, our practised expert declares that he has never met with a writer who could do so, and sustain a consistent and complete disguise throughout a piece of writing of moderate length.

The connecting links between the letters of a word, consisting usually of fine strokes either near the top or near the bottom, appear to furnish a great clue to the experts. The down-strokes can be altered or disguised with comparative ease: the fine up-strokes not so easily. It is very curious to see how Mr. Chabot amalgamates Francis and Junius into one person in this matter. The word "the," of course repeated over and over again, differs considerably in the thick or down-strokes of the two writers; but a peculiar approach to horizontality in the thin strokes connecting the letters, is observable in both; and he dwells on the great difficulty of a man being a hypocrite on this particular point, except for a few words at a time. The word here just used, "time," happens to be apropos to another clue explained by Mr. Chabot. There are four varieties observable in writing, in regard to the roundness and sharpness of the tops and bottoms of letters. Some specimens are round at top and bottom, much used in law-writing; some are sharp or angular at top and bottom, in favour among ladies; some are round at top and angular at bottom; some just the reverse—all these being tendencies, irrespective of the proper shape of the letters themselves. Now Mr. Chabot

counted up the number of instances in which the word "time" occurs in the several documents; in order to show that both writers adopted the peculiarity of making the letter "i" in "time" round at the top and angular at the bottom, the reverse of the plan followed by most persons.

The habit of using a magnified small letter for an initial, instead of a proper capital A, M, or N; is another thing which the experts appear to have narrowly scrutinised. Some writers use this substitution largely; they could not readily get out of the habit; and an inadvertency on this point might defeat an attempt to disguise one's customary handwriting.

Besides the shape, size, fineness, slope, roundness, angularity, and connecting links of the letters in a word, and the mode of initialising first words and proper names, there is an almost infinite number of points of difference between the handwriting of different persons. Some differ from others in emphasising their words by numerous capitals, a style which the imitators of Carlyle know something about; a much larger number underline the words to which they wish to draw attention; some make abundant use of single quotation marks, ' ', others of double, " ", although no actual quotation is given; some rely greatly on dashes (—), others on notes of admiration (!), others on parentheses (); a few precise people try to observe the proper gradation of , ; : . in a sentence; some content themselves with commas and full-stops alone; while others seem to think that punctuation is a meaningless formality. Other habits which persons more or less acquire, tending to associate them with a particular kind of handwriting, relate to the mode of arranging sentences into paragraphs; the mode of correcting mistakes or supplying omitted words; the tendency to spell certain words in an erroneous way, the abbreviation of words wherever possible, such as don't, won't, couldn't, tho', &c.; a tendency to make short work with all such terminal syllables as ing, ment, ation, ful; a habit of making all the down-strokes of the i, n, u, and m, as nearly alike as possible, reducing such a word as minimum to fifteen similar down-strokes, &c. In writing letters, whether of business or friendship, men differ in these among other points: putting the date and place at the bottom instead of the top of the letter; omitting the address of the writer whenever possible; placing the day before the month in the date;

writing the names of all the months at full length, and a multitude of others.

One's handwriting is, in fact, a part of one's self to a greater degree than most of us suppose.

A WRESTLE WITH NIAGARA.

I WAS standing about thirty or forty yards in advance of the Clifton, that is, thirty or forty yards nearer to the Horse-shoe along the brink of the rocks, and opposite the American fall. The ground must have been about the same height as the opposite fall, but, owing to the immense hill down which the rapids rush, it was possible to distinguish any object of the size of a boat a considerable distance above the fall, so that, now it was pointed out to me, I saw, in the middle of the rapid, a huge log of wood, the trunk of a tree, which had lodged there some years before, and upon it a black speck. This, after some observation, I perceived to move. It was a man. Yes; he and his two companions had, on the previous night, been rowing about some distance above the fall. By some means or other they had ventured too near the rapids, had lost all command of their boat, and had been hurried away to destruction. It was supposed that about half a mile above the fall the boat had upset, and, with two wretched men still clinging to it, went over the fall at about nine or ten o'clock at night, while the third man was driven against this log of wood, climbed upon it, and sat astride of it through the darkness of the night, amid the roar, the turmoil, and the dashing spray of the rapids.

I crossed the river, ascended the rock by the railway, and hurried to the spot, where I found him so near that I could almost distinguish his countenance. He was then lying along the log, grasping it with both arms, and appeared exhausted to the last degree. He was evidently as wet from the spray, as though he had been standing under water. By this time people were assembling, and different plans for his rescue were proposed and discussed on all sides; already, indeed, one effort had been made. A small boat had been firmly lashed to a strong cable, and dropped down to him from the bridge, which crossed the rapid between the mainland and Goat Island, about sixty yards above the log.

This boat had proceeded a few yards in safety, was upset, span round like a piece

of cork at the end of a thread by the force of the water, which finally snapped the cable in two, and the boat disappeared over the fall.

But now a despatch had been sent to Buffalo (a distance of little more than twenty miles) by electric telegraph, desiring that a life-boat should be sent by the first train, nine-thirty A.M., and this in time arrived, borne on the shoulders of about twenty men, and a splendid boat she was, large, built entirely of sheet iron, with airtight chambers; a boat that could not sink. She was girt round with strong ropes, and two new two-inch cables brought with her. All this arrangement naturally took up much time, and the poor wretch's impatience seemed extreme, so that it was thought advisable to let him know what was going on. This was done by means of a sheet, upon which was written in large letters in Dutch (his native language), "The life-boat is coming." He stood up, looked intently for a minute, and then nodded his head. When the boat was at last launched, the excitement was intense. Two cables, each held by many men, were let down from either end of the bridge, so that they might have some command in directing the course of the boat down the river. She seemed literally to dance upon the surface of the water like a cork.

The rapid consists of a number of small falls distributed unevenly over all parts of the river, so that there are thousands of cross currents, eddies, and whirlpools, which it would be utterly impossible to avoid, and in which lies the danger of transit for any boat between the bridge and the log. The life-boat's course was steady at first: she arrived at the first fall, she tripped up and swung round with a rush, but continued her course safely, only half filled with water. Again she descended with safety, but at length approaching the log she became unmanageable, swinging either way with immense force, spinning completely over, and finally dashing against the log with such violence that I fully expected the whole thing, man and all, to have been dislodged and hurried down the rapid. But, no, it stood firm—the boat had reached its destination. Yet, alas! how useless was its position. It lay completely on its side above the log, and with its hollow inside directed towards the bridge, played upon by the whole force of the current, which fixed its keel firmly against the log. It seemed immovable. The man himself climbed towards it, and in vain tried to pull, lift, or

shake the boat; nor was it moved until both cables being brought to one side of the river by the united force of fifty or sixty men, she was dislodged, and swung down the rapid upside-down, finally pitching headlong beneath an eddy, entangling one of her cables on the rocks, and there lying beneath a heavy fall of water, until in the course of the day, one cable being broken by the efforts of the men to dislodge her, and the other by the sheer force of the current, she went over the falls—the second sacrifice to the poor fellow, who still clung to the log, swayed between hope and fear. The loss of this boat seemed a great blow to him, and he appeared, as far as we could judge at a distance, at times to give way to the utmost despair. A third boat was now brought—wooden, very long, and flat-bottomed. Its passage was most fortunate, and as she floated down, even alongside of the log without accident, hope beamed in every countenance, and we all felt the man might be saved. Hope also had revived in him. He stood for some time upon the log making signals to those who directed the boat.

He now eagerly seized her, drew her towards him, jumped into her, and made signs to them to draw him up. This was commenced, but some of the tackle had caught, and it was deemed necessary to let it loose for an instant. This was done; the boat floated a few feet down the rapid, swung round the lower end of the log, entangling the cable beneath it, and there remained immovably fixed. Once more the poor fellow's work began. He drew off one of his boots and baled the boat, he pushed at the log, climbed upon it, and used every possible exertion to move the boat, but in vain! An hour was spent in these fruitless efforts—an hour of terrible suspense to all who beheld him. He worked well, for he worked for his life. Three months after, this boat retained its position, nor will it move until the rocks grind its cable in two, or the waters tear it piecemeal into shreds.

Another plan must be devised, and this, with American promptitude, was soon done. A raft of from twenty to thirty feet long and five feet broad was knocked together with amazing rapidity. It consisted of two stout poles, made fast, five feet asunder, by nailing four or five pieces of two-inch board at each extremity; thus the machine consisted of a sort of skeleton raft, with a small stage at either end. On one of these stages—that to which the cables (of which there were two) were lashed—was tightly fixed a large empty cask, for the sake of its

buoyancy, on the other a complete network of cords, to which the man was to lash himself; also a tin can of refreshments, he having taken nothing since the evening before; three or four similar cans, by the way, had been let down to him already, attached to strong pieces of new line, but the cords had in every instance been snapped, and the food lost.

The raft was finished, launched, and safely let down to the log. The poor fellow committed himself to its care, he lashed his legs firmly, and then signalled to draw him up; thus for the second time the ropes had begun to be drawn up, the raft advanced under the first pull, but its head, owing to the great light cask, dipped beneath it, and as the raft still advanced, the water broke over it to such a depth that the man was obliged to raise himself upon all fours, keeping his chin well elevated to avoid being drowned. We expected at every pull to see his head go under, but, alas! they pulled in vain, for the front of the raft, pressed down by the weight of falling water, had come in contact with a rock, and would not advance. The ropes were slackened, she fell back, but again hitched in her return. It was then determined to let her swing to another part of the rapid, where the stream did not appear quite so impassable. This was done, and a second attempt to draw it up was made, half-way between the log and the opposite shore (a small island). This also failed from the same cause, therefore it was proposed to endeavour to let the raft float down and swing round upon the island. This was commenced, but with the old result, the cable was caught in the rocks, and the raft remained stationary. However, she was floating easily, and the poor fellow could rest.

Early in the day, for the afternoon was now far advanced, one of the large ferry-boats (built expressly for crossing beneath the falls) had been brought up, but had lain idle. This was now put into requisition, and nobly she rode down towards the raft, whilst in breathless silence we all watched her as she dipped at the various falls, and each time recovered herself. I shuddered as she was launched, for I began to see that the man could not be saved by a boat; a boat never could return against a rapid, however well able to float down it. No sooner would her bow come into contact with a fall than it would dip, fill, and spin round, as did the first skiff which was lost.

The poor fellow himself was getting impatient—visibly so. He untied his lash-

ings, stood upright upon the raft, eagerly waiting to seize the boat, and jump into her. She had but one more fall to pass, and that fall was situated just above where he stood; she paused at the brink of it, swung down it like lightning, and, as he leaned forward to seize her, she rose on the returning wave, struck him in the chest, and he struggled hopelessly in the overwhelming torrent.

The exclamation of horror, for it was not a cry, which burst from the thousands who by this time were assembled, I shall never forget, nor the breathless silence with which we watched him, fighting with the waters as they hurried him along upright, waving both arms above his head. We lost sight of him at intervals, yet again and again he reappeared, and I thought hours must have passed in lieu of one brief half-minute. But the end came at last; once more I saw his arms wildly waved above his head, and, in an instant, the crowd turned from the spot in dead silence. The man was lost.

KING ALFRED'S WILL.

"I give to my wife Ealswithe, three manors: Wantage, because I was born there; Lamborne, because I dwelt there; and Wickham, because I fought there."

Thus, very near a thousand years ago
Willed Alfred, unto whom we English owe
Noble achievement and a high example.
Defeat could never lay his courage low;
Patient he was until he smote the foe,
And his reward was ample.

Great King was Alfred, though his folk were few;
To heroic thought and deed is greatness due;
And the Truth-teller was an absolute hero.
No despot he, with acts of sanguine hue,
Surrounded by a fulsome, flattering crew,
No sensual scoundrel-Nero.

His will's a poem. See, he leaves his wife
The Berkshire manor where he entered life.
Under the chalk downs, ancient lazy Wantage.
He leaves her Lamborne, where his memory's rife,
And Wickham, where with the Dane in deadly strife,
He won no mean advantage.

Ten centuries have passed; but Alfred still,
The man of perfect truth and steadfast will,
Among us it is easy to discover:
Who fights his foes with tranquil, patient skill,
Knowing that justice must its weird fulfil,
Who is a loyal lover.

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

SERLE'S PLACE, TEMPLE BAR.

TURN sharp round to the right northward, by the little cave of the hermit barber who has skilfully fortified himself for several generations (indeed ever since Steele's time) in a crevice of Temple Bar, and you find yourself in that dingy defile, once known to wits, poets, and geniuses of all kinds as Shire-lane, and latterly (since

July, 1845), as Serle's-place. When we say you *will* find yourself, we stand corrected; we mean rather, you *would*, once upon a time, have found yourself, for one step beyond the barber now is chaos. Serle's-place, where Steele once lived, and where the great Kit-Cat Club disported, in those palmy days when poets were ministers of state, has gone to return no more; it has melted into that air—that not very thin air—that now floats over the yawning space devoted to the Law Courts of the future. It is now, in a word, part of the great vacuum that London abhors, which is bounded westward by Clement's-inn, northward by King's College Hospital, and eastward by Bell-yard. So old London is vanishing while we write.

The whole reign of Queen Anne used to rise before our eyes when we ventured into that very shy lane, at whose Fleet-street entrance, in the Kit-Cat times, Whig dukes and earls by the half-dozen, not to mention Whig lyrical poets, satirists, and epigrammatists of the highest rank in Parnassus, have descended from their coroneted coaches and their swaying sedan-chairs, venturing boldly into the defile, and laughing till the old gable ends echoed again. Oh, for one gleam of the flambeaux of Halifax or of Dorset on the statues of Temple Bar! Oh, for one moment's eaves-dropping at the lattice of the Trumpet, to hear Dorset repeat his gay farewell song, To all you Ladies now on Land, or Halifax enunciate one of his wise axioms, true as Rochefoucauld's, yet far more kindly!

The origin of this King of Clubs no one seems clearly to establish. Ned Ward talks of the City Mouse and Country Mouse—written by Prior and Charles Montague (afterwards Earl of Halifax), to banter Dryden's Hind and Panther, and published in 1687—as having “stole into the world out of the witty society of the Kit-Cat.” But then who was Ward? The keeper of a punch-house in Fulwood's-rents, Gray's-inn, a reckless party writer, careless about facts, and indifferent to truth; a writer of no more value than the author of Tom and Jerry, who indeed painted with staring colours the London of the Regency, just as Ward did the London of the last years of William of Orange. His London Spy was written in 1699, and his testimony about a disputed matter in political literature twelve years before, is next to worthless. We therefore settle down to the old decision (disagreeing with Mr. Charles Knight) that the grand club arose, as nearly as possible, about the year 1699,

and flourished till about 1720. It was held at the Trumpet in Shire-lane; not in Gray's-inn-lane, as Ned Ward says, or in King-street, Westminster, as a later heretic is inclined to have it. It originated, in all probability, in a weekly dinner given by Jacob Tonson, the great bookseller, who published Dryden's Virgil, purchased a share of Milton's works, and first made Shakespeare accessible to the multitude. This great bookseller, "the left-legged" Jacob of the Dunciad, had a shop at Gray's-inn-gate, in Gray's-inn-lane, from 1697 to 1712, and then removed to opposite Catherine-street in the Strand. Now Ned Ward, who asserts that the first Kit-Cat meetings were at a pudding-pie shop in Gray's-inn-lane, and were then removed to the Fountain Tavern in the Strand, may surely be wrong also in the date of the club's starting. Malone, however, seems inclined to believe the Kit-Cat Club to be synonymous with "the Knights of the Most Noble Order of the Toast," to whom, in 1699, Elkanah Settle, one of Dryden's butts, and the lord mayor's laureate, addressed some complimentary verses. It seems doubtful whether it was the Trumpet (where Steele's club of country twaddlers afterwards met) which was kept by Christopher Katt, the mutton-pie man, at the sign of the Cat and Fiddle. Mr. Diprose, the latest writer on the antiquities of St. Clement's parish, decides that it was, and we like to think it was. The club derived its name, according to the Spectator (No. 9), not from Kit Katt, the pastrycook, who kept the house where the club dined, but from the pies, which derived their well-known London name from the maker. Pope treats the derivation as doubtful in the following neat and witty epigram upon the club:

Whence deathless Kit Katt took his name
Few critics can unriddle.
Some say from pastrycook it came,
And some from Cat and Fiddle;
From no trim beaus its name it boasts,
Grey statesmen or green wits,
But from that pell-mell pack of toasts
Of old Cats and young Kits.

The fact is simply this, that the name of the alliterative sign, representing the name of the owner, amused the town, and was chosen to designate the pies, and from the pies the club was christened. It seems very doubtful whether Dryden was ever more than a visitor at the club, as he died in May, 1700, and the club cannot be clearly traced back beyond 1699. Dryden's portrait, by Kneller, was certainly among those likenesses of the members painted for

Tonson's cottage at Barn Elms, and now preserved by Mr. R. W. Baker, a representative of the Tonson family, at Bayfordbury in Hertfordshire. To judge by the engravings of them by Faber (1735), the year before Tonson died, the club had consisted of forty-eight poets, wits, noblemen, and gentlemen. The proud Duke of Somerset, who was said never to allow his children to sit in his presence, and who gave his orders to his servants by signs, came early. Then followed the Dukes of Richmond, Grafton, and Devonshire, the great Duke of Marlborough, the Duke of Kingston, and, after the accession of George the First, that strange blundering prime minister, the Duke of Newcastle. Of earls there was Dorset, the patron of Prior and Dryden, whom the latter poet absurdly ranked with Shakespeare as the first of English satirical poets, and dubbed "the restorer of poetry, the greatest genius, the truest judge, and the best patron," and whom Rochester described as

The best natured man with the worst natured muse.

Sunderland, Wharton, that half madman, and the Earl of Manchester, were also members. Among the lords it counted Halifax the wise, and Somers, the good lord chancellor. Bluff, brusque Sir Robert Walpole was of them, and so at various times were Vanbrugh, the wit, dramatist, and architect; Congreve, the most courtly of gentlemen; Halifax's protégé, Granville, "the polite," as Pope calls him, a poet and secretary-of-war to Queen Anne; Addison, the greatest of our English essayists; Steele, that kindly humorist; Garth, the worthy poet and physician; Maynwaring, a poor writer but great conversationalist of the day; Stepney, a second-rate versifier and diplomatist, Arthur Attlie, of whom we know nothing; and Walsh, another small bard and a friend of Dryden, and patron and early adviser of Pope. Prior could hardly have belonged to the club after his perversion.

Of the poets in the Kit-Cat Club, Pope used to say that Garth, Vanbrugh, and Congreve, were "the three most honest-hearted real good men." The club in summer dined either at Tonson's villa, at Barn Elms, previously the residence of Cowley, or at the Upper Flask Tavern on Hampstead Heath. It was the smallness of Tonson's rooms at Barn Elms that led to Kneller's inventing that reduced half-length size for portraits still called by artists Kit-Cat. The club-room was standing in 1817, but was soon after joined to a barn and

turned into a riding-school. Sir Richard Blackmore, the poetical physician whom Pope and Dryden ridiculed, and who wrote to the rumbling of his carriage-wheels, describes the Kit-Cats on their way to Hampstead:

Or when Apollo-like thou'rt pleased to lead
Thy sons to feast on Hampstead's airy head,
Hampstead that towering in superior sky,
Now with Parnassus doth in honour vie.

The club gradually grew more and more political; the members became louder over their claret for Protestant ascendancy and the glorious House of Hanover. Gradually the wits fell out, and mere rank rose to the top. Pope says the club broke up soon after Lord Mohun, a dissolute rake and duellist of bad reputation, and Lord Berkeley, joined it, to the horror of sober old Jacob Tonson, the club secretary, who saw "they were just going to be ruined." Mohun, perhaps drunk, wantonly broke the gilded emblem off his chair; and Jacob told his friends with a sigh that "the man who would do that would cut a man's throat." In 1725 (George the First), the club had gone. Vanbrugh, in 1727 (George the Second), writing the year before his death to Tonson, says, in his gay pleasant way, "You may believe me when I tell you, you were often talked of, both during the journey and at home, and our former Kit-Cat days were remembered with pleasure; we were one night reckoning who were left, and both Lord Carlisle and Cobham expressed a great desire of having one meeting next winter if you can come to town—not as a club—but as old friends that *have* been of a club, and the best club that ever met." There is a pleasing tone of regret about this, as if Vanbrugh himself felt the sand run low in the glass, and there is a touch of pathos in the idea of the three fashionable club men in the country, sitting down at night, and counting who were left of the friendly tontine.

It was the gallant custom of this club once a year to elect by ballot a reigning beauty as a toast. To this queen of their choice the poetical members wrote by turns verses, which were etched with a diamond upon the glasses. The most celebrated of these toasts were the four beautiful daughters of the Duke of Marlborough, Lady Godolphin, Lady Sunderland, generally called the "Little Whig," the pride of that party, Lady Bridgewater, and Lady Monthermer; Swift's friends, Mrs. Long and Mrs. Barton, the niece of Sir Isaac Newton; the Duchess of Bolton, Lady Carlisle, Lady Wharton, and Mrs. Di. Kirk. A few of these epigram-

matic verses have been preserved, but they are, to tell the sober truth, for the most part flat as yesterday's champagne. Those written on the "Little Whig" and Lady Mary Churchill, by Lord Halifax, in 1703, are the most tolerable:

THE LADY SUNDERLAND.

All nature's charms in Sunderland appear,
Bright as her eyes, and as her reason clear;
Yet still their force, to man not safely known,
Seems undiscovered to herself alone.

The one on The Lady Mary Churchill is weaker, and even whiggier:

Fairest and latest of the beauteous race,
Blest with your parent's wit, and her first blooming face,
Born with our liberties in William's reign,
Your eyes alone that liberty restrain.

The words "Little Whig" were foolishly inscribed on the first stone of the now Haymarket Theatre, built by subscription in 1706, and placed under the management of Vanbrugh and Congreve.

But the prettiest story of the Kit-Cat toasts is that related by clever, eccentric Lady Mary Wortley Montague, of her own adventure as a child. On the night of the annual election, when lords and wits were proposing this or that beauty, and "dark eyes," "blue eyes," "swan neck," "bosom of Juno," "bust of Dian," and such phrases from the poets were flying about the best room at the Trumpet—as the flasks of Florence and Burgundy were being loudly uncorked, and the guests drew closer for the business of the evening—a whim suddenly seized Evelyn Pierpoint, Duke of Kingston, to nominate his little girl, then not eight years of age, declaring that she was far prettier than any lady on the day's list. The other members demurred, because the rules of the club forbade the election of any beauty whom the members of the club had not seen. "Then you shall see her," cried the duke, and instantly sent a message home to have the little lady dressed in her best, and brought to him at the tavern. She presently appeared from her sedan, shy at first, and wondering. She was received with acclamations, and her claim unanimously allowed, her health was drunk up-standing by all the Whig gentlemen, and her name duly engraved with a diamond upon a drinking glass. She was then passed round, like a bouquet, from the lap of one poet, patriot, or statesman, to the arms of others; was feasted with sweetmeats, overwhelmed with caresses, and, what perhaps already pleased her better than either, heard her wit and beauty loudly extolled on every side. Pleasure, she said, was too poor a word

to express her sensations; they amounted to ecstasy; never again, throughout her whole future life, did she pass so happy a day. She thought of that innocent time, perhaps, when Pope lashed her with scorpions; and again in her miserable old age, in Florence, when malice and scandal had mangled her reputation, and rioted on her good name.

It is difficult to realise in Jacob Tonson, the friend of Congreve and of Halifax, of Addison and Steele, that hard, grinding bookseller, who complained bitterly to Dryden that he had only got fourteen hundred and forty-six lines translated from Ovid for fifty guineas, instead of, as he had expected, fifteen hundred and eighteen lines for forty guineas, and who eventually paid him in bad silver. In the faithful secretary, who treasured his forty-eight portraits of club friends at Barn Elms, we lose sight of the little pudgy dealer in books at the Judge's Head at the south-west corner of Chancery-lane, whom Dryden is said to have etched in aqua-fortis and catalogued with "two left legs, leering looks, bull face, and Judas-coloured hair," a rough caricature not forgotten, be sure, by Tonson's Tory enemies of later years. We rather recognise him as Rowe, that solemn writer but merry liver, sketched him in 1714, in an imaginary dialogue between Tonson and Congreve, the author who wished Voltaire to look upon him simply as the fine gentleman. According to Rowe, the indestructible English passion of tuft-hunting spoiled Jacob, for he says:

While in your early days of reputation
You for blue garters had not such a passion,
While yet you did not live, as now your trade is,
To drink with noble lords and toast their ladies,
Thou, Jacob Tonson, were, to my conceiving,
The cheerfullest, best, honest fellow living.

To judge by a letter of Stepney to Tonson, "three o'clock in the morning" was no unusual Kit-Cat time, so that Addison must have had time to melt into geniality there, and Steele must have had Burgundy enough to send him home with eloquence sufficient to excuse himself to Prue, his somewhat vixenish wife. Nor was the Tory lampooner altogether wrong when he made Tonson say:

I am the founder of your loved Kit-Cat,
A club that gave direction to the state,
'Twas there we first instructed all our youth,
To talk profane, and laugh at sacred truth;
We taught them how to boast, and rhyme, and bite,
To sleep away the day, and drink away the night.

Many as were the wise things spoken in Shire-lane, countless as were the jokes that were cracked, there are not many anecdotes extant of the Kit-Cat nights. The lights

are extinguished, the glory passed away like the morning cloud, or a dream when one awakens. One story, however, survives, that is highly characteristic of Steele's amiable weaknesses. One grand night, the great Whig festival of the celebration of King William's anniversary, Doctor Hoadley, the worthy Bishop of Bangor, father of Hogarth's great friend, went with those friendly comrades, Steele and Addison, to solemnly drink "the immortal memory." Steele, in his anxiety to preserve William's memory lost his own, and the invisible spirit of wine beguiled him into folly. Presently John Sly, an eccentric hatter of the day, and a most zealous politician, especially when drunk, crawled into the room on his knees, in the old cavalier fashion, to drink a tankard of ale to the immortal memory of the Dutch hero. No one laughed, so Steele, tender even in his liquor, kept whispering to the rather staggered bishop, "Do laugh, it is humanity to laugh." By-and-bye, the bishop prudently withdrawing, Steele, altogether overcome by sympathy with the immortal memory, was discovered among the dead men, packed into a chair, and sent home. Late as it was, nothing would satisfy the wilful man, but being carried to the Bishop of Bangor, no doubt to apologise. At last, by quiet and steady resistance, the chairmen got Steele home, and, with considerable coaxing and difficulty, up into his bedroom; but there a qualm of kindness and courtesy came over him, and he would insist on seeing them down-stairs. Having done this, with the most tipsy complacency, he returned quietly to bed. Next morning, penitent Steele sent the tolerant bishop the following admirable couplet:

Virtue with so much ease on Bangor sits,
All faults he pardons, though he none commits.

One night, when the good-natured Garth lingered at his club wine, Steele reproved him. Garth had before then, on his first arrival, been talking of the patients who were waiting for him. "Well," said Garth, pulling out his list of fifteen, "it's no great matter, Dick, after all, whether I see them to-night or not, for nine of them have such bad constitutions not all the physicians in the world can save them, and the other six have such good constitutions that all the physicians in the world could not kill them."

In 1817, that clever bookseller, Sir Richard Phillips, made a pilgrimage to Tonson's old villa at Barn Elms, to see the room where the great club had met. The people had never heard of the Kit-Cat, but

showed him a club-room in a detached building in the garden. It was eighteen feet high, and forty feet long by twenty feet wide. The mouldings and ornaments had been grand. The faded red hangings still remained on the walls, and on the faded squares where Kneller's portraits had been hung the numbers and names still remained, written in chalk, for the guidance of the hanger.

The Trumpet (afterwards the Duke of York), No. 86, Middle Serle's-place, was, if not the stronghold of the Kit-Cat, at least a tavern sacred to the memory of Steele, for there, in No. 86 of the Tatler, he makes old Isaac Bickerstaff (the character he himself assumed), on Thursday, October 27, 1709, receive that distinguished deputation of Staffordshire country gentlemen, and delightful, pompous old fogies, Sir Harry Quickset, Baronet, Sir Giles Wheelbarrow, Thomas Rentfree, Esquire, justice of the quorum, Andrew Windmill, Esquire, and Mr. Nicholas Doubt, of the Inner Temple, Sir Harry's grandson, wait upon him at the unconscionable hour of nine in the morning. Nine arrives, the chairs are set. The tea equipage is fixed. A knock comes at the front door. Steele opens it; there is a long silence, and no one enters. At last he hears the punctilious old fellows saying: "Sir, I beg your pardon. I think I know better." "Nay, good Sir Giles." Steele looks out slyly, and sees the worthy people, every one with his hat off and arms spread, offering the door to each other. After many offers they enter with much solemnity. "I met my old friend Sir Harry," Steele says, "with all the respect due to so reverend a vegetable. I got him with great success into his chair by the fire, without throwing down any of my cups. The knight bachelor told me he had a great respect for my whole family, and would, with my leave, place himself next to Sir Harry, at whose right he had sat every quarter sessions these thirty years, unless he was sick." Steele offends the justice by asking him to sit down after the simple squire, but this error he promptly corrects, and requests the gentlemen who have done him this great honour to drink a dish of tea. They all declare they never drink tea of a morning, and the young Templar winks at Steele, and puts out his tongue at his grandfather, as much as to say, "Tea, indeed."

The steward, "in his boots and whip," after an ominous silence, then proposes that they shall at once all adjourn to some

public-house, where every one can call for what he pleases, and enter upon business. There is then a good deal of stiff ceremony, and filing and countermarching, the justice taking good care to duly cut in before the squire. On the first landing, a maid, coming up with coals, disturbs the procession, which gets locked by aid of the mischievous young Templar, and but for a noise in the street, which Steele wickedly suggests is a fire, upon which they run down anyhow, the checkmate would have been interminable. But, says the delightful chronicler, "we drew up in very good order, and filed off down Shire-lane, the impertinent Templar driving us before him as in a string, and pointing us out to his acquaintances who passed by." Slipping between the justice and the squire, Steele hears the latter whisper to the steward, "that he thought it hard that a common conjuror should take place by him, though an older squire." At Temple Bar, Sir Harry and Sir Giles get safely over, but a row of coaches cuts off the rest. At last they all land, and draw up in very good order before Tooke's (a bookseller), "who favoured our rallying with great humanity." From there, with equally serious ceremonies of precedence, they proceed to Dick's Coffee-house, where, repeating their civilities, they mount to the high table, "which has an ascent to it, enclosed in the middle of the room," the whole house being much moved by the entry of persons of so much state and rusticity. Sir Harry at once calls for a mug of ale and Dyer's Letter, and, on being told the letter is not taken in there, cries, "No? then take back your mug. We are like, indeed, to have good liquor at this house." Here the Templar gives Steele a second wink, and would be confiding did not Steele look very grave. The gentlemen not seeming inclined to begin business before a morning draught, Steele calls for a bottle of Mum, soon for a second, then for a third, and at last Sir Harry tells him, in a low voice, that the place is too public for business, and he would call upon him on the morrow morning and bring some more friends with him.

In No. 132 of the Tatler, the same delightful humorist sketches a club of fogies at the Trumpet, with whom he says he is in the habit of spending two or three hours every evening to unbend his mind after study, and to prepare himself for sleep. This club of heavy, honest men originally consisted of fifteen members, but "the severity of the law in arbitrary times," as

Steele slyly says, and the natural effects of old age, had reduced the society to five persons. Sir Geoffery Notch, the patriarch of the club, had sat in the right-hand chair time out of mind, and was the only man of the set allowed to stir the fire. He was of an ancient family, and had run through a great estate with hounds, horses, and cock-fighting. He looked upon himself as a worthy, honest gentleman, who had had misfortunes, and he regarded every thriving person as a pitiful upstart. Major Matchlock, the next senior, had served in the civil wars, and knew all the battles by heart. He thought nothing of any action since Marston Moor, and was much esteemed in the club for his nightly story of how he was knocked off his horse at the rising of the London apprentices. Honest old Dick Reptile (an ill-chosen name) was the third. Dick was a good-natured, robust man, who spoke little, but laughed at other men's jokes. He always brought his nephew, a youth of eighteen, with him, to show him good company, and give him a taste of the world. This youth was usually silent, but whenever he did open his mouth or laugh, his uncle constantly made the same jocular remark: "Ay, ay, Jack; you young men think us fools, but we old men know you are." The wit of the club was a benchman from the Temple, who in his youth had frequented the fashionable ordinaries round Charing-cross, and pretended to have known Jack Ogle. He knew by heart about ten distiches from Hudibras, and he never left the club till he had applied them. If any modern wit was mentioned, or any town frolic spoken of, he would shake his head at the dulness of the present age, and tell a story of Jack Ogle. This Trumpet Club met precisely at six o'clock in the evening, and at three-quarters past six the major usually began his story of the battle of Naseby. On Steele's arrival, Sir Geoffery, to show his goodwill, offered him a pipe of his own tobacco, and stirred up the fire. In common gratitude, Steele drew him on to the story of old Gantlet, a favourite gamecock, on whose head the knight in his youth had won five hundred pounds, and lost two thousand. Gantlet's generations, diet, battles, and manner of life, roused the major to spur to Edge Hill fight, and a duel of Jack Ogle's naturally followed. Old Reptile was extremely attentive to all that was said, though he had heard the same every night for twenty years, and upon all occasions winked to his nephew to mind what passed. This innocent con-

versation was spun out till about ten, when the maid came with a lantern to light-home old Bickerstaff. So, with a humour half like Goldsmith, half like Cervantes, Steele sketches an old haunt in the dingy London lane that has just melted into air.

Shire-lane, mean and obscure in its youth, splendid in its middle life, grew infamous in its old age. It had been christened "Rogue's-lane" in the reign of James the First; latterly it became vile and squalid, and swarmed with thieves and their female companions. Nos. 1, 2, and 3, Lower Serle's-place, were infamous dens, that once possessed a secret communication, as the latest chronicles of the lane record, with No. 242, Strand, through which thieves could escape when they had beaten and stripped the fools they had decoyed. Nos. 9, 10, and 11, were beggars' houses, and known as Cadgers' Hall; not long since, several bushels of eleemosynary bread, thrown scornfully aside by professional beggars, were found there by the police. No. 19, a double house, was known as the Retreat, because thieves could run through it and dodge down Crown-court into the Strand. No. 13, a printing office, had formerly, says Mr. Diprose, been the Bible public-house, a house of call for printers twenty years ago. Jack Sheppard used to frequent this, and there was a trap in the middle of one room by which the agile young carpenter used, it was said, to drop through into a subterraneous passage and so escape into Bell-yard, and from thence into his old Clare Market haunts. Jack died for the good of his country in 1725. Yet in 1738 the lane had not improved, for, on January the 18th of that year, Thomas Cave and Elizabeth Adams were hanged at Tyburn, for having robbed and murdered a certain unfortunate Mr. Quarrington, at the Angel and Crown Tavern in Shire-lane. In the days of the blundering old watchmen, a man was one night thrown down-stairs and killed in one of the dens in Shire-lane. The frightened murderers acted like the men in the Little Hunchback story in the Arabian Nights, for they took the stiff body and propped it up against a neighbour's door, where the lumbering watchmen, turning on their lanterns, soon after found it. Many years passed without a clue. At last, two dangerous fellows confined in the King's Bench were overheard, during a quarrel, accusing each other of having had a hand in the Shire-lane murder, and Justice stretched out her sword. The Temple Bar Stores, formerly the Sun Tavern, had been a notorious house for Tom and Jerry

frolics in the reckless times of the Regency. Strype, in 1720, speaks of the lower part of the lane as being filled with houses inferior to those of the Carey-street, or northern end. A tavern named the Antigallican in Shire-lane, was the great resort at the beginning of the century of sporting and fighting men. It was kept by Harry Lee, the father of Alexander Lee, the first and original "tiger," brought out and invented by the notorious Lord Barrymore, the eldest of the worthy kinsmen Cripplegate, Newgate, and Billingsgate.

During the Chartist times, says a local antiquary, a policeman was sent disguised as a shoemaker to join a violent democratic club in Shire-lane. At last, during a meeting, a hatter suddenly rose, angrily told the chairman there was a spy in the room, and proposed to throw him at once out of window. A more humane member, however, proposed as a milder measure to open the door, and if the spy did not immediately depart, to carry out the original proposition. The sergeant lost no time and made straight for the door, but his comrades, whom he had ordered to occupy the ground floor, not knowing him in his disguise, knocked him down with their truncheons as he tried to slip down-stairs. In Ship-yard, close to Shire-lane, once stood a block of houses, one of which was used by coiners, and was called in their slang "the smashing Lumber." Every room had a secret trap, and from the upper story, where the sunashers worked, there was a shaft reaching to the cellars, into which, by means of a basket and pulley, the whole apparatus could in a moment be conveyed. The proprietor made his fortune, but soon after the establishment of the new police, the manufactory was rummaged out and destroyed.

The Trumpet stood midway on the left side of Shire-lane as you ascended from Temple Bar. It was a substantial red brick house, with four windows abreast in the two first stories. The sign of the Trumpet used to be below and between the windows of the first floor. Elias Ashmole, the great antiquary, from whom the Ashmolean Museum derives its name, lived in Shire-lane in 1670. Old Anthony Wood dined there with him on May the 1st of that year, and after dinner the two old virtuosi went over to Wood's lodgings in the Middle Temple, and spent nearly two ookey hours over Ashmole's coins, medals, pictures, and astrological manuscripts.

In a sordid sponging-house in Shire-lane, witty, worthless Theodore Hook, when

he returned to England after those careless and unsatisfactory defalcations at the Mauritius, fraternised with poor, clever, sunken, hopeless Maginn. Here Hook joked and woke up the old echoes of the Kit-Cat Club merrily over his claret as he and his worthy companions roared out his own song:

Hang him, and curse that perfidious pernicious
Rascal who cleared out the till at Mauritius.

So much has local history recorded of the sunshine and the darkness, the glory and the shame of the degraded alley that has just been swallowed up by ever-hungry Time.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LX. ARRIVED.

"WELL, what is it, Mr. Darkdale?" inquired Maud, eagerly, as soon as he had reached the side of the carriage.

"Two bailiffs, miss, in charge of an officer, arrested for debt, and something worse; they have had a bit of a row in the coach; he's a troublesome fellow. I knew something about him; he has been up before, and I think there's a criminal warrant this time."

"Was he hurt?"

"A scratch, I fancy. It isn't easy always keeping those dangerous cases from hurting themselves; he's very strong, and always slipping away if he can. But they have him fast enough this time; and the road's clear of them now; so I suppose I had best tell our post-boys, miss, to get on?"

"Please do; it is growing late: How long will it take to reach Carsbrook?"

"About an hour, miss."

Maud leaned back in the carriage, the unpleasant excitement of their recent adventure still tingling in her nerves.

Could it be that Captain Vivian had got into a scrape, and was really in the hands of bailiffs? A sad hearing for poor Ethel Tintern; rather a shock even to Maud.

"Do you know anything of that officer those people were taking away in the carriage?" inquired the young lady, suddenly, of her attendant, so soon as they were again in motion.

"I may, miss, or I mayn't. I could not say for certain, unless I was to see him," answered the servant.

"Have you ever seen an officer named Vivian, who is tall, and has light hair; a young man, rather good-looking?" persisted Maud.

"Well, I—I think I did," she replied,

watching Maud's face. "I have seen some one like that. Veavian? Yes. He used to call hisself Veevian."

"The person who passed us by, who said they were murdering him—how horrible his voice was!—said his name was Vivian. You heard him, of course?"

"Well, I made shift to hear; but there was a noise, you know," answered Mercy Creswell, evasively.

"Oh, you must have heard him call out that his name was Vivian; you are not at all deaf," said the young lady, irritated.

"I did hear something like it, for certain," she replied.

Miss Mercy would have been very glad to know, while under these examinations, what the extent of Miss Vernon's information actually was, for however willing she might be to tell stories, she was especially averse to being found out at this particular juncture. The sense of this inconvenience a good deal embarrassed her accustomed liberty of speech.

All this time Maud was possessed by the suspicion that, for some reason or other, Mercy Creswell was deliberately deceiving her, and that she knew just as much as Darkdale did about this Mr. Vivian. More than ever she disliked being assigned this particular attendant, and more and more puzzled she became in her search for her mother's motive.

For awhile she looked from the window. The wood had gradually thinned, and now but a few scattered and decayed firs stretched their bleached boughs under the moonbeams, and stooped over the peat.

"Why should you try to deceive me?" said Miss Vernon, suddenly turning to Mercy Creswell, who, with her mouth screwed together, and her cunning eyes looking from her window upon the moonlit prospect, was busy with her own thoughts.

"Me deceive you? La, Miss Maud! Why should I deceive you, above all? I would not, for no consideration, miss. I hope I have a conscience, miss. I'd be sorry, I assure you, Miss Maud."

"Why, then, did you not tell me, at once, that you knew something about that gentleman, Mr. Vivian? You know as much about him as Mr. Darkdale does."

"Well now, indeed, I do not, miss, no sich thing. I may 'a seen him, and I think I did at Lady Mardykes; he's a cousin, or something, to her."

"Oh, really? A relation of Lady Mardykes."

"Yes, miss. If it be the same I mean." Maud mused for a minute or two.

"How far are we now from Carsbrook?" she asked.

"Well, miss, I'd say little more than three mile. Here's the finger-post, and down there, among the trees, is the Red Lion, and there we'll get into the right road, without another turn, right on to the house."

"I'm not sorry," said Maud, looking from the windows with more interest than before. "It has been a long journey. You were at Carsbrook this morning?"

"Yes, miss," said the maid, who had gradually grown to look careworn and pallid, as they neared their destination.

"Was Lady Mardykes there?"

"No, miss," answered Mercy.

"She was expected there, wasn't she?"

"Expected there?" repeated Miss Creswell. Let me think. Oh, la! yes, to be sure, she was expected."

"How soon?"

"How soon?" 'Twill be to-morrow morning. Oh, yes, to-morrow morning. To-morrow's Tuesday? Yes, to-morrow morning, for certain."

They were now driving through a pretty wooded country. On the left was a great park wall, grey and moss-streaked, mantled here and there with ivy, and overlapped by grand old trees. On the right were hedge-rows, and many a sloping field; and, a little in advance, the chimneys and gables of a village, and the slender spire of a rural church, white in the moonlight.

"We're near home now, miss," said Mercy.

"Oh," said Maud, looking out more curiously. "What wall is that?"

"The park wall, miss."

"It would not be easy to climb that; higher, I think, than Roydon wall."

"It is very high, miss."

"And how soon is Miss Max expected to arrive?"

"Miss Medwyn?" exclaimed the maid, laughing, all at once, in spite of herself.

"Why do you laugh? Miss Medwyn is coming here, and I thought she would have been here to-day," said Maud, a little haughtily.

"Like enough, miss," said Mercy, drying her eyes. "La, ha, ha, ha! it is funny—I beg your pardon, miss. I suppose she will—time enough. But she was not here when I left this morning."

"We'll hear all about it when we reach the house. I suppose there is nothing like a dance, or anything of that kind, while Lady Mardykes is away?"

"Oh, la! yes, miss. No end of dancing and music and everything that way," an-

swered Mercy, with a great sigh, and a haggard look, after her brief merriment. "There's a—what do you call it?—of singing and music to-night.

"A concert?"

"Yes, that's it, miss, a concert. A concert of music. La! they does it so beautiful, you wouldn't believe. I wish Miss Medwyn was here to try her pipe at it. Hoo, hoo, hoo—la! I beg your pardon—she's so staid and wise, miss!"

Mercy was stuffing her handkerchief into her mouth to stifle her laughter. But this time it was over quickly.

At this moment the postilions wheeled their horses to the left, and pulled them up, calling lustily, "Gate, gate!"

"So we have arrived," said Maud, letting down the window, and looking out with the curiosity of long-deferred expectation.

The leaders' heads seemed almost touching the bars of a great iron gate, over which burned a solitary lamp, acting, lighthouse fashion, rather as a warning than as an effectual light.

They were under the shadow of gigantic elms, that threw their branches from side to side: the carriage-lamps dimly lighted a few clusters of their dark foliage, and the light over the gate showed, for a few feet round and above it, the same moveless leafage.

"We shan't be long reaching the house?" she inquired of Mr. Darkdale, who was walking by the window toward the gate, for she remembered "approaches" three miles long after you enter the gate, deceiving you with a second journey before you reach the hall-door.

"Not five minutes, miss," said the man, hardly turning his head as he passed.

Was he growing a little gruffer, she thought, as they approached their destination?

Darkdale was talking earnestly in a low tone with the man who had come to the gate at their summons; and then he called:

"Be alive, now—open the gate."

* In a minute more they were driving up the approach at a rapid pace under rows of trees. Suddenly the shadowy road they followed turned to the right, and took a direction parallel to the high road; about a hundred yards on, they drove up to the front of the house, along which this road, expanding before it into a court-yard, passes. And now they pull up before the steps of the hall-door. And the horses stand drooping their heads, and snorting, and sending up each a thin white vapour, through which the metal buckles of their harness glimmer faintly in the moonlight.

Mr. Darkdale was already on the steps ringing the bell.

CHAPTER LXI. IN THE HOUSE.

MAUD was looking at the house—a huge structure of the cagework sort, which stood out in the light broad and high, its black V's and X's and I's traced in black oak beams, contrasting like gigantic symbols with the smooth white plaster they spanned and intersected, and which showed dazzlingly in the moon's intense splendour, under which also many broad windows were sparkling and glimmering.

A footman in livery stood before the open door, in the shadow of a deep porch, and Maud observed that Mr. Darkdale seemed to speak to him as one in authority, and by no means as one servant to another.

Maud was looking from the carriage window; and the hall was full of light, which came out with a pleasant glow, showing the gilt buttons and gold lace on the servant's livery, flushing the white powder on his head, and making Mr. Darkdale look blacker against its warm light. Some figures, gentlemen in evening dress, and ladies in brilliant costume, passed and repassed a little in perspective.

There came from the interior, as the hall-door stood partly open, the sounds of violins and other instruments, and the more powerful swell of human voices.

Mr. Darkdale turned and ran down the steps, and at the carriage window said:

"There's a concert going on, and a great many of the people moving about in the hall. Perhaps you had better come in by a different way?"

"That is just what I wished," said Miss Vernon.

But Darkdale did not seem to care very much for her sanction, and in fact had not waited for it. He was now talking to the drivers, and the hall-door had been shut. He returned, and said, at the window:

"Your boxes shall be taken up to your room, Miss Vernon, and as the night is so fine, you will have no objection, I dare say, to walk round to the entrance to which I will conduct you and Mercy Creswell."

He opened the carriage-door, and the young lady got out and found herself in the court-yard. Looking along the face of the great house to the right, a mass of stables and other offices closed the view; behind a broken screen of fine old elms; and to the left it was blocked by dark and thicker masses of towering trees.

In this latter direction, along the front

of the house, Mr. Darkdale led the way. In the still air his swift steps sounded sharp on the hard ground. He did not seem to care whether she liked his pace or not.

As she hurried after him, from the open windows, whose blinds, transparent with the lights within, were down, she heard, it seemed to her, very fine voices singing, as she thought, that brilliant staccato air, *Quest an' Nodo, &c.*, from *Cenerentola*, and so unusually well that she was almost tempted to pause and listen.

But Mr. Darkdale did not consult her, but glided on to the extremity of the house, where a high wall confronted them, and with a latch-key opened a door, beside which he stood, holding it wide, for Miss Vernon and her attendant, and shutting it immediately on their passing in.

They were now in the great quadrangle which lies against the side of the house, with the quaint Dutch flower-beds, like fanciful carpet pattern, surrounding it, and the tall yew hedges giving it a cloister-like seclusion. Miss Vernon easily recognised this by the description; the trim yew hedges were visible, overtopped by a dense screen of trees at the other side, every distance marked by the thin mist of night; and in the centre stretched the smooth carpet of grass, in the midst of which stood the old mulberry-tree.

"Oh! This is the croquet-ground?" said Miss Vernon to her attendant, as they passed on.

"Ay, that will be the croquet-ground," answered her maid, a little absently, as if a gloom and suspicion had come over her. Her fat face had grown more than usually putty-coloured, and she was screwing her lips together, and frowning hard.

Mr. Darkdale spoke never a word until he had reached the door through which Automarchi, some nights before, had admitted himself and Doctor Malkin to the self-same house.

A servant, not in livery, stood by this door, which was ajar, and opened it wide at their approach.

Darkdale whispered a few words to him, the purport of which Maud did not catch, and was not meant to hear, and in this same tone the man replied a word or two.

It was rather a chill reception. But then her hostess was absent, and certainly was not accountable for the uncomfortable ways of the odd attendants whom it had pleased her mother to assign her.

The servant hied away into the door; it seemed to execute some behest of Dark-

dale's in haste; and Darkdale himself stood at it instead, to receive them.

"So, in Carsbrook at last," said Maud, with a smile, as she placed her foot on the oak flooring of the very long passage with which we are already acquainted.

Mercy Creswell screwed her lips harder, and raised her eyebrows, "pulling," as they say, in her abstraction, an old and dismal grimace.

"Now, miss? Oh, ay to be sure," said Mercy Creswell, as it were, half awaking, and looking vaguely about her.

Mr. Darkdale shut the heavy door, which closed by a spring bolt, with a clang that boomed through the long passage, and then, with an odd familiarity with internal arrangements, he drew the bolts with noisy rapidity, and turned the key which was in the lock, and drew it out.

"Now, miss, you'll not be long getting to your room," said Mercy Creswell, her eyes wandering along the wall, and something sunken and weary in her unwholesome face.

"Well, I should hope not," thought Maud, a little surprised.

Darkdale was walking along the passage with rapid strides, having merely beckoned to them to follow.

Miss Maud was a good deal disgusted at this procedure. She was obliged, in order to keep this man in view, to follow at a rapid pace, and as he turned a corner, which she had not yet reached, Maud saw a person emerge from a side-door in the perspective of the passage, the sight of whom very much surprised her.

It was Doctor Malkin who stepped forth under the lamp which overhung that door, his bald head flushed, and his disagreeable countenance smiling grimly.

With the smile still on his thin lips he turned his head and saw Miss Vernon.

He thought, I dare say, that she had not seen him, for he instantly drew back into the recess of the doorway.

Perhaps he had not recognised her, perhaps he did not choose to be recognised in this part of the house. But a few days ago he certainly was not even acquainted with Lady Mardykes. But he had a good many friends, and she an infinitude, and an introduction might, of course, have been very easily managed.

This all passed in her mind nearly momentarily, as she walked quickly into the side passage after Darkdale, Mercy Creswell keeping hardly a foot behind, and a little to the other side.

The impression this odd little incident left upon her mind was, notwithstanding, unpleasant.

Having turned to the left she saw the large screen I mentioned on a former occasion, that protected the door at which Darkdale was now tapping. It was hardly opened when Maud reached it.

"Can my room be on this floor?" she wondered.

No, it was no such thing. Mr. Drummond, short, serious, and benevolent, with rosy cheeks and brown eyes, and bald head, and a pen behind his ear, was standing in a short office coat at the threshold.

"This is Miss Maud Vernon, daughter of Lady Vernon, of Roydon Hall," said Darkdale, performing this odd office of introduction in a dry, rapid way.

"Half an hour later than we expected," said Mr. Drummond, pulling out a large old-fashioned silver watch by the chain, from which dangled a bunch of seals and keys on his comfortable paunch; and then glancing back, it was to be presumed at a clock, in the interior, "no, twenty-five, precisely five-and-twenty minutes late," and he turned from the corners of his eyes upon Miss Vernon a shrewd glance, and quickly made her a respectful bow.

"I'll tell you about that by-and-bye," said Darkdale.

"I hope the young lady will find everything to her liking, I'm sure."

"Miss Vernon's come for a short visit to *Lady Mardykes* here, a few weeks or so," interrupted Darkdale. "And there are two boxes, largest size, and two middle size, and a dressing-case, and a bonnet-box, and here's Lady Vernon's list of the jewels she's brought; and—come here Miss Creswell—she's to wait on Miss Vernon. Which is Miss Vernon's room?"

He dived into the room, and returned in a moment with a big book like a ledger.

"Miss Vernon? Yes. Here it is. This will be it—A A, Fourteen."

"A A, Fourteen," repeated Darkdale, musing. "That is at the west side of the cross-door, eh?"

"Yes, so it is."

"I—I didn't think that," said Darkdale, drawing nearer to him, with an inquiring glance and a dubious frown of thought.

"Yes, it's all right; and here's the voucher and 'question' wrote with his own hand across it."

Darkdale read the paper, and returned it to the plump fingers of the secretary.

"It is—that's it," he said.

"I'm a little tired. I should like to get to my room, please. I suppose my maid knows where it is?" said Miss Vernon, who was beginning to lose patience.

"In one moment, presently, please, Miss Vernon." Darkdale whispered a word in the ear of Mercy Creswell. "Now, Miss Vernon, please, we have only a moment to delay on the way, and then your maid shall show you to your room."

At the same quick pace he led her through a passage or two, and opened a door, which she entered after him.

"You shan't be detained a moment here, Miss Vernon," he repeated.

It is a spacious oval room, panelled massively up to the ceiling, and surrounded, as it seems, with doors all alike in very heavy casings. It is rather bare of furniture. A thick Turkey carpet covers the floor. There are four enormous arm-chairs on castors, and a square table, covered with stamped leather, and with legs as thick as cannons on castors, stands in the centre of the room. A ponderous oak desk lies upon the table, and is, in fact, attached to it, the whole heavy structure forming one massive piece. Except these articles of furniture, there is not a movable thing in the room.

The chamber is lighted from the ceiling, over the table, by a small oval line of gas-jets, which looks like a continuous ribbon of flame.

There is something queer, and almost dismaying, in the effect of this bare and massive room, with its four huge, modern, purple leather chairs.

The immense solidity of the mouldings and panelling that surround it, as well as its peculiar shape, would reflect back and muffle any sound uttered within it. And, somehow, it suggests vaguely the idea of surgery, the strap, the knife, and all that therapeutic torture.

The effect of the mild equable light is odd, and the monotony with which the doors, or the sham doors, match one another all round, has something bewildering and portentous in it.

While she looks round at all this, Mr. Darkdale has left the room; and turning about she finds that Mercy Creswell, perhaps, never entered it. At all events, she certainly is not there now, and Maud is quite alone.

One thing is obvious. It certainly is pretty evident that Lady Mardykes is not at home. So at least Maud thinks.

"There must, however, be some servant,

I think, who can show me my room. I'll try," she resolves.

Maud accordingly tries the handle of the particular door through which she thinks she had entered, but it will not turn; then another, with the same result. It is rather a disconcerting situation, for by this time she cannot tell by what door she had come in, or by which of all these Mr. Darkdale had gone out, each door is so like its neighbour.

She looks about for a bell, but she could discover nothing of the kind.

Before another minute had passed, however, one of the doors at the other side of the room opened noiselessly, and a marble-featured man, with strange eyes, and black, square beard, stood before the panel, like a picture. It was Antomarchi.

"Oh, I'm afraid the servant has made a mistake," said Miss Vernon, who was vexed at her absurd situation. "He showed me in here as a room where I was to wait for my maid, till she returned to show me the way to my room."

"She will be here in a moment, Miss Vernon; there has been no mistake. I hope your head is better?"

"Thanks, a great deal better."

She was surprised at his knowing that she had complained of a slight headache on her journey.

"I'm glad of that. My friend, Lady Mardykes, will be here in the morning. I am a doctor, and I am held accountable for the health and spirits of all the inmates of this big house."

The pallor and stillness of his face, the blackness of his hair and beard, and the strange metallic vibration of his bass tones, produced in Maud a sensation akin to fear, and made even his pleasantries formidable.

"Your maid must, by this time, be at the door."

He opened a door, beckoned, and Mercy Creswell came into the room.

"If you permit me, Miss Vernon, I'll try your pulse." And he took the young lady's wrist before she could decline. "You don't often drive so far. You'll be quite well in the morning; but you must not think of coming down to breakfast."

"Is Miss Medwyn here?" inquired Maud, before committing herself to stay in her room all the morning.

"No, Miss Medwyn is not here"

"I wonder what can have happened. Lady Mardykes wrote to me to say she would certainly be here, to stay some time, this morning."

"An uncertain world!" he observed, with a hard smile. "But Lady Mardykes is seldom mistaken. Whatever she said one may be sure she believed; and what she thinks is generally very near the truth. You had an alarm on the way? But you did not mind it much?"

"It did startle me a good deal for the moment; but it was soon over. I think the whole party were startled."

"I dare say; but you don't feel it now? It won't interfere with your sleep, eh?"

"Oh, no," laughed the young lady; "I assure you I'm quite well—I'm not the least likely to be on your list of invalids, and so I think I'll say good-night."

"Good-night," said he, with his peculiar smile, and a very ceremonious bow, and he opened the door and stood beside it, with the handle in his fingers.

Mercy Creswell took the bedroom candle that stood, lighted, on a table outside the door. The young lady walked on. Antomarchi's smile was instantly gone, and the stern, waxen face was grave as before.

Antomarchi's eyes rested for a moment on Mercy Creswell as she passed. He nodded, and made her a slight sign.

You would have judged by her face that she stood in great awe of this man. She positively winced; and with a frightened ogle, and very round eyes, and mouth down at the corners, made him a little curtsy.

He shut the door without waiting for that parting reverence, and she saw no more of him or the oval room for that night.

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PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER IV. SENTENCED.

"GLAD you have come in, Mr. Riley; the general has rung twice."

"And why didn't you answer the bell?" asked Mr. Riley, a tall, weather-beaten, grey-haired man, of soldierly appearance.

"No. I thank you," replied the butler; "when I have known him as long as you, perhaps I will, but our acquaintance is much too short at present, 'and never let me see you before lunch time,' he says to me the other day, and I made up my mind that I would act accordingly."

"The general's rather short tempered in the morning," said Riley, with a grim smile as he left the room to answer the bell, which pealed out for the third time.

"Short tempered," said the butler to the footman, who entered the pantry at the moment, bearing a tray of glasses; "short tempered! He thinks he's among the niggers still, I suppose, but he'll have to alter all that now he's come over here."

"Of course he will, Mr. Johnson," said the footman; "I don't hold with blacks, which is good enough to sweep crossings and sell tracts, but not figures enough for in-door service."

Meanwhile, Riley rapidly made his way to the library, opened the door, closed it carefully behind him, and stood upright at the attitude of attention, waiting for his master to address him. The room was empty at the moment, but through a doorway at the further end of it came a man with quick, hasty footsteps, bearing two letters in his hand. A man above the

middle height, and considerably past middle age, thin almost to gauntness, upright in his carriage, rapid and nervous in his movements. His iron-grey hair, worn without parting or division, curled in a thick crisp mass on his head. His small grey moustache shaded his thin lips, but his cheeks were whiskerless, and no beard softened the outlines of the strong and heavy jaw, which plainly indicated the owner's possession of a quality characterised by his friends as firmness, by his foes as obstinacy.

Such outward appearance had Major-General Sir Geoffry Heriot. As he entered the room, he looked somewhat vacantly at the servant, then seating himself at his writing-table, spread his letters open before him, and commenced the perusal of one of them. Riley waited until his master again looked up, when he said, "You rang, general?"

Sir Geoffry roused in an instant. "Three times, Riley. Where were you?"

"Gone to the stables, general, to look at the horse that came last night. It's against your orders for any of the servants to come to you in the morning, and I thought you would like to hear news of the horse. He'll make a fine charger, general, and will carry Mr. George splendidly."

"How can you tell that?" said Sir Geoffry, quickly; "you never saw Mr. George!"

"No, general, that's true," said Riley; "but—"

"You never will see him," said Sir Geoffry.

"Never see Mr. George," cried the man in astonishment; "why I thought in a month's time he was coming here?"

"Mr. George Heriot will never come here," said Sir Geoffry, looking up sternly

at his servant; "more than that, there is no such person."

"No such person as your honour's son?" cried Riley, who, like most of his countrymen, when excited flavoured his sentences with a vast amount of brogue.

"I have no son, Riley."

"Is Mr. George dead?" asked the man, dropping his voice.

"He's dead to me," said Sir Geoffry, in the same tone; "do you understand?"

"That's just what I don't do," said he, looking up in despair.

"All that you have occasion to know," said Sir Geoffry Heriot, coldly, "and you should not know even so much, if you had not served me faithfully so many years, is this: that the person whom I have hitherto been accustomed to think of as my son, and to whose companionship and affection I have been looking forward as the solace of my life, has done something which renders it necessary for me not merely to discard and disown him, but to forget that he ever existed."

"Your honour," said Riley, involuntarily taking a step nearer to his master, and speaking with trembling lips and outstretched hands, "to discard and disown—is it Mr. George, your son?"

"Have I any other son, that you need ask?" said Sir Geoffry, unmoved: "Understand, too, that henceforward his name will never pass my lips, and must never be mentioned by you. I am aware, Riley, that silence is one of your qualities, but have you ever spoken of my son's expected visit here to any of your new associates in the servants' hall?"

"Never, Sir Geoffry."

"Never even mentioned his existence?"

"Never, general. Mr. George's name has never crossed my lips save to your honour, since we left the regiment."

"That's right; now attend to me. I expect a visitor to-day. You will have timely notice of his approach, by seeing the carriage coming up the avenue, and you will take care to be in the way to open the hall-door. Mind that this is done by you, and none of the other servants; let them know if they ask anything about it, that it is by my special orders. You will not ask the gentleman his name; if he gives it, you will keep it to yourself, and not even repeat it to me. You will simply announce him as a gentleman, send the carriage to the stables, and bid the driver come round again in half an hour's time. When I ring the bell you will see the gentleman to the

door, and show him out, without a word. You understand me, without a word."

"I understand, general," said the man, with his head bent down, and in a low tone of voice.

"Now go!" and Sir Geoffry pointed to the door.

"It's Mr. George," thought Riley to himself, as he went slowly down the passage; "it's Mr. George! He's coming to see his father for the last time, and not all the angels in heaven, or all the other things anywhere else, would make the general budge an inch when he has made his mind up to do even so cruel a thing as this."

When Sir Geoffry was left to himself, he took up the longer of the two letters which lay before him, and read it again attentively. As he read, the blood flushed in his bronzed cheeks, his teeth were set firmly together behind his thin lips, his eyes kindled, and at length crushing the letter in his hand, he began pacing the room with hasty strides.

"A coward!" he muttered, in short, broken sentences; "a coward, that is it, neither more nor less. To think, after all I have gone through and all I have anticipated, that I should come back to this; that flesh and blood of mine should receive a blow, and, as Goole phrases it, 'sit down patiently under the insult.' A coward, eh? Gave this other man the lie, and when he hit out, naturally enough—what else could have been expected of him?—refused to call him out, but sits down patiently under the insult. That's the tailor's blood cropping up in that—you can never get rid of the taint; like gout it will skip one generation, but it comes out in the next; it passed by me and shows itself in him. Just like your low-bred cur, who will fly out and bark and growl, but runs away directly a stick is shaken at him. To think that he should have received a blow, and—What does Goole say?" Here he referred to the letter. "'Townspiece present.' I am thankful to Providence that I did not obey my first impulse, and go up to Cheeseborough to see this lad and his regiment directly I landed. With the exception of Goole and this man—what is his name?—Cleethorpe—whom he refers to, they know nothing of me except my name, and they are not likely to remember that for long after their drill meeting is over. They were all county men, I recollect Goole telling me, and Cheddar is a long way off, and has not much communication with London, so that I am not

likely to be brought across any of them. 'This reason for his refusal to fight,' continued Sir Geoffry, again referring to the letter, "this reason he declines to impart to anybody." Declines to impart! What does Goole mean by writing such stuff as that to me, even if he be taken in by it himself? Reason—a man has no reason for being a coward save that he is one. And here I am, with this word 'coward' ringing out in every sentence, and knowing that it is applied to my own son!"

He stopped suddenly, and threw up his arms in the violence of his rage and grief, then let them drop by his side, and continued mechanically pacing to and fro with his chin resting on his breast.

After about an hour had passed away in this manner, Sir Geoffry's quick ear caught the sound of footsteps in the passage close to the door. He had only time to throw himself into a chair at the writing-table, and to assume the appearance of being engaged with his pen, when the door was opened, and Riley appeared. Close behind him Sir Geoffry saw the outline of another figure, and it required all the self-command he possessed to subdue the nervous shivering, which ran through him at the sight, from head to heel.

Riley studiously averted his eyes from his master as he made the announcement. "A gentleman, Sir Geoffry!" Sir Geoffry replied, "Show him in;" but, after the first glance, did not look up from the writing in front of him until he heard the sound made by the closing door. Then he raised his head, and rose from his chair, but as his glance fell upon the young man standing before him, his thoughts leaped back over the abyss of twenty years, and a woman's face, which he had not seen during that period, but which, when he last looked at it, bore just the same strange, proud expression, rose before his fancy. He sank back in his chair again, and shut the vision out with his hand.

"Father," cried the young man, stepping forward.

In an instant Sir Geoffry was himself again.

"Son," he replied, rising to his feet, and putting forth his hand to check the young man's advance, "this is the first time we have ever interchanged these terms, and it will be the last."

"Father!" again cried the youth.

"I am Sir Geoffry Heriot, if you please, to you as well as to everybody else. Whom

you are now I know, but what you may be for the future is for your own decision, and utterly without any reference to me."

The young man looked up as though doubting the evidence of his ears.

Presently he said: "You have had a letter from me, sir?"

"I have had a letter from Colonel Goole, stating what occurred on Thursday night in a billiard-room at Cheeseborough," said Sir Geoffry.

"But from me, I ask," said the young man, impetuously; "had you not a letter from me, stating that I was coming to you forthwith, and that I would explain that occurrence?"

"I had," said Sir Geoffry, quietly; "but there was no occasion for you to have troubled yourself to have come on such an errand. I have no doubt Colonel Goole states the circumstances correctly; you can take his letter and judge for yourself." And he threw the letter across the table.

George Heriot took up the letter and read it through, Sir Geoffry watching him intently, muttering as he did so, "And he can read of his own disgrace without turning a hair!"

"The facts are correctly stated, sir," said George, folding the letter, and handing it back to his father.

"Of course," said Sir Geoffry, contemptuously; "gentlemen are no more in the habit of perverting facts than of submitting tamely to insult. We will go through the statements seriatim if you please. You and this Mr. Travers," said the general, referring to the letter, "had this quarrel at a billiard-table?"

"We had."

"He accused you of obtruding on his stroke, and of purposely pushing his arm?"

"He did."

"You gave him the lie?"

"Yes."

"And he then struck you a blow?"

"He did."

"That blow you have not attempted to avenge. You remain, as it were, with a red mark of his buffet on your cheek. You have not demanded satisfaction for this insult that has been put upon you?"

"I have not."

"On the contrary, you have refused to call this man to account?"

"I have."

"And you dare, sir, to come here and confront me with such a decision as that in your mouth?" cried the general, almost shrieking with rage.

"I dare," said George Heriot, very quietly.

His son's coolness had a subduing effect upon the elder man. His look was still disdainful, and his manner imperious, but his voice was considerably moderated as he said:

"Your daring to do so proves more plainly than anything else that we have never met before, and that you have been brought up in complete ignorance of my character."

"I certainly was not brought up to regard you either as an idol whom I was to worship, or as a bully from whom I was to run away," said the young man, still very quietly.

Sir Geoffry's face darkened, and he seemed as though about to again give vent to his passion. But he checked himself, and said:

"I am indebted to those to whom your early days were confided for having failed to represent me in the last objectionable character. As to the former," he added, grimly, "they were not likely to make any mistake about that. However, that is not relevant to the subject at present under discussion. You allow that all that is said by Colonel Goole in this matter is true?"

"Perfectly true."

"Then it only remains with me to announce the determination which I have come to in the matter. Stay, though. Colonel Goole tells me that you announce yourself as having some reason for refusing to demand satisfaction of this man."

"Of any man," interrupted George.

"Of any man," repeated the general. "I beg your pardon, and accept your correction in its wider sense. This reason you declined to state to Colonel Goole, or to any of your brother officers. Does your objection to mention it apply equally to me?"

"It does not."

"No! Then you can give me your reasons?"

"I can."

"And will?"

"Certainly."

"I confess I shall be curious to hear what can have been your motive for sacrificing a very promising career, almost before you had entered upon it."

"My sole motive for refusing to fight a duel—that is the right way to put it, as, even had I been challenged, I should have declined the meeting—was, that I had sworn a solemn oath never to engage in such an encounter."

Sir Geoffry laughed aloud. "The old story," he cried, with a sneer; "the coward's never-failing plea. So tender of his word, so regardless of his honour. And to whom, pray, and under what circumstances, was this oath given?"

"To whom? To your wife: my mother."

Sir Geoffry started, and shook himself as though he had received a cut from a whip. He steadied himself quickly, and then, placing his fingers upon the table, remained standing.

"And you ask under what circumstances," continued the lad. "I will tell you. The first time I can recollect any allusion to it was when I was quite a little child. We were living then at Saumer, a little village within a short distance of Boulogne. We used to go into Boulogne in a kind of omnibus, drawn by one horse, and driven by a man named Joseph. It used to start very early in the morning, that the countrywomen might be sometimes at market with their fruit, and flowers, and vegetables. And one morning, just as we were skirting the sands, we saw a little knot of men gathered round something which they were slowly carrying away. Joseph stopped his horse, and ran to see what it was, and coming back told us that it was the body of an officer who had been just killed in a duel. That night I spoke to my mother about it, and asked her what a duel meant, and why the officer had been killed. After she had explained this, she cried a great deal, I recollect, and made me promise never to allow myself to be mixed up in such matters. The subject was never alluded to again between us until"—and here the lad's voice broke a little—"until she was dying. We had had a long, long talk, and she had told me of all that she wished me to do. I was sitting by her; her eyes were closed, and I thought she was sleeping, when she suddenly roused up, and clutching me by the arm, reminded me of the scene which we had witnessed from the Saumer omnibus, and of the promise which I then made. 'You were very young then,' she said, 'and you are but a mere child now, but you will have sense enough to understand me, and to do what I bid you, when I tell you that it is my urgent wish, and that I am going away from you, and you will never see me again. Say after me these words: "I swear by my hopes of salvation, and by the love I have for my mother, that I will never fight a duel, or take part in one in any way."' I repeated the words after her, then I laid

down beside her, and she put her arms round my neck, and kept them there till she died."

The boy ceased. The vivid recollection of what he had described had excited him somewhat as he proceeded, and his narrative had, he imagined, had some effect upon his father, who sat with his face averted, and his head resting on his hand.

But whatever emotion Sir Geoffrey might have felt, he was careful to let no sign of it escape him. After a pause he looked up, and said, in hard, dry tones:

"It is a pity you did not think of all this before you gave the lie to your brother officer, or that, having done so, you did not suffer the fact to escape your memory. The circumstances being as they are, I do not allow for a moment that your statement is a sufficient excuse for your conduct. But it has had a certain effect. When I received your colonel's letter this morning, I determined upon disowning and discarding you on account of your conduct as described to me by him, without entering into any parley as to the past or the future. That determination I adhere to, but in consequence of what you have said, I feel it due to myself to let you know something, at least, of the history of the past. When you have heard it, you will more readily comprehend your mother's horror of duelling, and what may perhaps have been a mystery to you—the reason that the latter portion of her life was passed away from me.

"Your grandfather was a tailor named Causton, residing in a small hamlet near London, where there was a good foundation school. To this school he sent me, his son, and there, when quite a child, I formed an intimate friendship with a lad named Heriot. This lad died when he was about eleven years old, and his father, who was a clerk high up in the India House, adopted me in his place, on condition that I should bear his name, and give myself up entirely to his direction. My father was dead at that time, and I never cared particularly about the tailor's connexion, so that I gladly accepted Mr. Heriot's offer, and, under my new name, I was sent to Addiscombe, and thence into the Indian army. I stuck resolutely to my profession, never asking for leave of absence during twenty years. Then I obtained a long furlough, and came home to England. All traces of the Causton name and the tailor parentage were obliterated by this time. I was Major Heriot, well

known and highly respected throughout the Indian service; and, as I had lived frugally, I had been enabled to save ample means.

"I met your mother in society, and admired her immensely. She was one of two sisters, both of whom were raved about; but your mother's was the softer beauty of the two, and in manner she was much the sweeter and more innocent. My attentions pleased her, my position was thought an eligible one by her friends, and we were married. Within a year of our marriage, and shortly after your birth, your mother presented to me a gentleman named Yeldham, whom she had known before she made my acquaintance. He was an Englishman, but had lived most of his time abroad, had foreign manners, and was accustomed to foreign ways. He was a diletante artist and an amateur musician, and was supposed to be particularly fascinating to women. Your mother took great delight in his society, and he was so much at our house that I spoke to her about it. She laughed at the time, and told me if I used my eyes I could see that it was her sister, who was living with us, that was in reality Mr. Yeldham's attraction. I thought no more of it, and shortly after we all went abroad, loitering up the Rhine to Baden, where Mr. Yeldham joined us. I again fancied I perceived an understanding between your mother and this man, which was anything but agreeable to me. I spoke about it in confidence to her sister, Miss Rose, and although she strove to make me believe I was wrong, I was not satisfied with her explanation. Finally I watched their conduct at a grand fancy ball given by a French banker, who was staying at the place, and, in consequence of what I saw, I sent Mr. Yeldham a challenge. Twenty-four hours after that we met at one of the small islands on the Rhine, and I shot him through the chest. With his dying breath he declared that I had been in error throughout, and that it was not even your mother with whom I had seen him at the ball. He was a man of honour, and did his best to save a woman's reputation, but of course his statement was false."

"What did my mother say?" interrupted George.

"She corroborated Mr. Yeldham in every particular, and accused me of being a murderer," said Sir Geoffrey, bitterly, "and as we held such very unpleasant opinions regarding each other, I thought it best that we should separate, and I accordingly re-

turned to India. Her horror of duelling, and the reason of my separation from her, are now, I think, sufficiently explained."

"Perfectly," said George, "but——"

"One moment," interrupted Sir Geoffrey; "I have given you this explanation, which I was by no means called upon to do, and I now proceed to state to you my determination with regard to yourself. You have disgraced the name which I have raised, and for the first time that I have borne it have caused me to blush at its mention. The name is yours, and I cannot forbid your bearing it, but you shall never again be acknowledged or treated by me as my son. From this moment I disclaim and disown you. You are entitled, when of age, to your mother's property; I am willing to anticipate that event, and allow you to enjoy the income arising from it now, on condition that you assume another name and pledge your word never in any way to reveal your identity, or claim relationship with me."

"I am much obliged to you, sir," said the young man, struggling to repress his emotion, "for your very generous offer, which does you equal credit as a gentleman and as my father! I will not touch one penny of my mother's fortune until I am legally entitled to it. But, meanwhile, you need have no fear of my degrading that name by which you set such store, but which, after all, does not belong to you."

"Sir!" cried Sir Geoffrey.

"Be good enough to hear me out," said George, quietly. "You cannot forget that you are my father, more readily than I will rid myself of every recollection that I am your son. No intrusion of mine shall ever remind you of my existence. I shall leave you to the enjoyment of the reflections which cannot fail to arise when you look back upon your estimable conduct, both as a husband and a father. But I anticipate the pleasure of seeing you once again. I shall make it the business of my life to discover the real history of Mr. Yeldham's acquaintance with my mother, and when I find, as I am certain I shall find, that you were grievously deceived by your own vanity and jealousy, I shall have the pleasure of coming and proving it to you, as some slight return for your noble conduct towards my mother and myself. And now I must trouble you to ring the bell and order the carriage to be brought round."

With this and a slight bow, the young man turned on his heel, and quitted the room.

For a moment Sir Geoffrey was speechless, his rage choked him, then he said, "What an insolent rascal! but after all it was better than whining. It shows he has some pluck left. And I was afraid he would whine."

HOW PARIS MOURNS.

WE are a large party of joyous people bound from Paris for Versailles, this bright Sunday morning. The train is crammed; the tramway omnibuses are in such demand, that to travel by them would involve an hour's waiting at the ticket office; the Paris cabmen are demanding five times their usual fares; so we take up our position on the roof of a second-class carriage, gratified at having found a place at last, and determined to enjoy ourselves to the utmost. "We" are French people for the most part. Papa, mamma, two neatly dressed children, and a nurse with a basket, from which the neck of a wine-bottle and a snow-white napkin protrudes; Jules, with a flower in his button-hole, a pair of tightly fitting ladies' boots upon his feet, protects Antoinette tenderly from the wind which cuts sharply through the second-storied carriage, while she arranges her shawl coquettishly, and turns from side to side as he directs; two grim-looking old men, who indulge in infantile merriment at Antoinette's airs; and the rank and file of our company, workmen from Belleville, shopkeepers from the Boulevards, garçons from the cafés, soldiers in uniform on leave, all rejoice exceedingly at what they have come out to see. There are several first-class passengers among us; but this arrangement on the second-class roof resembles the upper deck of an American steamer, and is so convenient for sight-seeing, that there is a positive rush for places there. The two Englishmen present are the only marplots of the party. They heave sighs, forsooth, and look horror-stricken, and draw doleful comparisons between the appearance of the country side now, and when they last visited Versailles, and comport themselves generally, as if they were visiting some scene of horror instead of a merry show. The French people see this, and with characteristic politeness endeavour to rouse them from their insular gloom. These ruins are pretty, but there are better to be seen than these. *Has monsieur, the stranger, beheld the Tuileries, the establishment of the minister of finance, the*

Hôtel de Ville? What pretty sights are they! But here, look you, is Fort Issy; there, is a whole suburb reduced to ruins; here, are heaps of stones which were country houses a few months ago; there, over the trees yonder, is the crumbling Palace of St. Cloud; and (with mingled pride and playfulness this), "None of the damage was done by the Prussians, it was all the Versaillists and the Commune!" This it is which has crowded the trains with pleasure-seekers, and has been the moving cause of many a picnic. When the train stops at Sèvres a cloud of gaily dressed, chattering people alight, and push their way through the wicket with that mixture of docility and impulsiveness which distinguishes railway passengers in France. Many of them carry tasteful, well-filled baskets, which will be opened about noon, and will furnish forth the modest feast of the day. "There are most pretty ruins at Sèvres," it is explained to us; "whole streets of houses have been demolished, country mansions have been made mere skeletons, and the entire place is one grand ruin." There is so much brimming animation in the speaker's manner, that you ask yourself if he is, by any possibility, connected with the building trade, or can in other ways be likely to benefit by repairs. But it is obvious that the train cannot be filled with masons and their sons, daughters, mothers, aunts, and hangers-on, and, as every one is in equally high spirits, it is clear that the love for an outing and for something new has over-ridden and quenched sorrow at national abasement and shame. Shame did I say? Why, the people we were travelling with seemed proud of disaster and defeat. They implored us, as it were, to probe their wounds, and to rejoice over their depth and width. It reminded me of the first sounds I heard on the morning of my arrival in Paris. The Commune had just fallen, the blood-stains had scarcely been removed from the streets, arrests were taking place every hour. I looked for sombre faces, and listened for the sound of lamentation and woe. I found neither.

Let us dance and sing, with a tra, la, la!

If sorrow comes I laugh the more, with a tra, la, la!

came lustily from the throat of a house-painter, who, with a score of fellow-labourers, began his work of redecorating the hotel (the proprietor and employer is a German, who has just resumed the charge of his own business, after nine months' enforced absence) at six A.M.

I never saw more industrious or better workmen. The one I have quoted sang the loudest, but there was a jest on every lip, and smiles on all the faces, and when the vocalist-in-chief told the world that, for his part, he had found that, whatever happened, it was wise to sing and dance with a tra, la, la! and that while the wine-flask was full, and Jeannette smiled, it mattered little what came next, there was a general hum of appreciation, as from convivially disposed bees. This happened in a wing of the hotel which had only been reopened a few days, and was occupied for the first time since the siege; so that when a bedroom door opened, and "Are ye goin' to stop that infernal row now?" was given in stentorian tones by an Irish visitor, indignant at being roused so early, the light-hearted house-painters were as much astonished as I was amused. There was a fine burst of laughter, I promise you. Not a syllable of the protest was understood. But its style and manner were unmistakable, and the word went round how Pierre was singing, and how a large English gentleman had been made angry. There were some other painters at work a few doors off, and an hour later, when one of these looked into our court-yard for a brush which had been borrowed of him the day before, the story was told again, with amplifications and suggestions, and by him related to his fellows on his return. It is more than probable that every one of these men were implicated in the deeds of the Commune, that their immediate friends and brothers are buried in quicklime beneath where they fell fighting, that others of their immediate connexions are in duraneo vile at Versailles, to be shortly transported to Cayenne, and that they have each secrets of their own, which it would endanger their necks to tell. Talk to them, try, to gain their confidence, and a lowering look comes into their eyes, and the tigerish nature which lies beneath this veneer of playfulness betrays itself. But meanwhile they have lost the cast, you see, so it is tra, la, la! until the turn comes again, and they shall do their part, to make the red flag wave over the barricade and public edifices once more.

There were men in blue blouses patiently carting away the rubbish from the government offices which have been destroyed in the Rue de Rivoli, and others gazing up at the shell of the Tuileries, and wondering audibly "when the little Thiers would order the rebuilding," most of whom, it is

fair to conclude, were Communists at heart, and had a share in the devastation they would be employed to remedy. There was neither sympathy nor sorrow, either among them or the shifting crowds of sight-seers. Nor was there—and this appeared the most extraordinary feature of all—any of the dejected, sullen look which seems appropriate to defeat. This may have been partly policy, for it would have been dangerous to liberty, if not to life, to show, by word or gesture, approval of the destruction wrought by the Commune; but there was a reality about the merriment, a universal frothiness which could not have been assumed. The statues on the Hôtel de Ville on the side nearest the Rue de Rivoli have, with one exception, escaped injury. While the ruined outer wall stands alone, like a stage front, and, with nothing behind it, its ornaments remain intact, save one of the allegorical figures, which has been snapped off at the shoulders. A world of witty sayings was expended over this incident by the gibing crowd. "Is it Faith, look you, or Prudence which has lost her head?" "Whose head shall we put on here?" provoked an endless number of laughing replies. "Badinguet," "Trochu," "Roche-fort," and a score of less-known names were given in succession, until a man, in cap and bells, and with a performing monkey, was seen to take up his position in the street close by, when the crowd turned at once to the new amusement.

"Plans of Paris, sir! five feet by three, and with all the recent burnings coloured so as to represent real flames, for seventy-five sous! Buy a plan, sir? It is the bird's-eye view taken while the city is blazing in twenty places at once, and only seventy-five sous. They charge a franc for the same thing on the Boulevards—see, sir—published at the office of the *Moniteur*, and authentic. Only seventy-five sous for a map of Paris in flames."

This is a street appeal to the multitude. More elaborate illustrations of the burnings are to be had in the shops. Here is a beautifully executed little map for the pocket, by a military officer of rank; there, an equally elaborate performance, glazed, and on rollers, and on a much larger scale. Both show the injuries inflicted on the city. One kind of mark denotes burning, another partial burning, a third whether it is public or private buildings, or both, which have suffered, a fourth where damage has been done by shells, a fifth where the houses have been pierced by cannon-balls. One of

these maps lies before me as I write, and it is plain that as much pains and trouble have been given to it as is bestowed upon any other kind of survey. The extensive districts of Montmartre, La Villette, and Belleville, defy the minute classification which is given to the rest of the city, and the legend, "Some parts struck by shells, and others burnt by incendiaries," runs in great red letters over them all. There is a terrible display of red elsewhere, and, as the urbane shopman explains to me, there is an appropriateness, a touch of humour on the part of the draughtsman, in making the colour of the Communist party mark out its evil deeds. Water-colour drawings of the representative characters among the insurgents are offered for sale in the best shops. The *Petroleuse*, a wretched object, half monster, half lunatic, and with a diabolical grin on her withered face, stands with one hand in her pocket, and a petroleum bottle in the other; while under the generic title of the *Barricade*, a collection of male wretches are depicted, whose appearance marks them as objects to be arrested and shot, or there is no truth in physiognomy. These pictures are beautifully executed, are full of artistic merit, and one hundred francs each is asked for them. They are for the portfolios of the rich, for the tourists who will flock through Paris as usual this summer, and they have already met with a ready sale.

The next print-shop on the Boulevards attracts a crowd which extends half-way across the pavement. Two drawings, each five feet high, and handsomely framed, are the objects of attraction here. In one a beautiful young woman, who is displaying rather more leg and bust than is customary in polite society, is being led forward by a figure whom it would be profanity to name in this connexion. The woman has the word *Liberty* inscribed upon her cap, and there is a halo of glory on the other head. She is erect, courageous, strong, and the wreck of empires, crowns, thrones, and monarchs is being crushed beneath her feet. This young lady is intended for regenerated and republican France. The companion picture is inscribed *Despotism*, and portrays a repulsive hypocrite, in an ermine cloak, and with a heavy white moustache, kneeling devoutly to the theatrical Mephistopheles who is crowning him. This elderly gentleman is the Emperor of Germany, depicted as ruling by satanic arts; and if our popular conceptions of Mawworm, Mr. Pecksniff, Joseph

Surface, and Mrs. Brownrigg could be fused, the result would be very like what is here given as Kaiser Wilhelm. These are serious productions, as is the photograph labelled "Sedan," which hangs close by. Here the dethroned Emperor Napoleon, the late elect of the people, is portrayed. A bluff gentleman, in robust health, lounges at his ease in a luxurious open carriage, smoking a cigarette. His mien and bearing indicate a luxuriously selfish nature, profoundly satisfied that its own comforts are secure. The chariot containing him is drawn by eight spirited horses, ridden by postilions in the imperial livery, and its road is over the dead and dying on the field of battle. Awful figures with heads bandaged, as if with grave-clothes, rise from the ground to shake their clenched hands menacingly. Maimed soldiers implore that they may be spared, and that the hoofs of the horses and the chariot wheels may be directed elsewhere than over their wounded limbs; and the soldier nurses, who are tending them, shrink in horror, or utter curses loud and clear at the only reply vouchsafed. For the postilions beat back the wounded with their long whips, and urge the horses over their prostrate bodies at a furious pace, while the smoker puffs away, as calmly indifferent as if he were in his easy-chair at home. Following the carriage is a troop of Prussian calvary—more as a protection than a guard—and the whole is given as a veracious representation of what followed the capitulation of Sedan. It is a horrid picture. You can almost hear the groans and shrieks of the wounded soldiers, whose agonies are being wantonly increased; while the active brutality of the menials on horseback, the iron indifference of the occupant of the carriage, and of the foreign troopers who follow in his wake, and with their horses' hoofs give the torture a final stroke, are so vividly rendered, that it is impossible to contemplate them without a shudder. The crowd lingers over this picture fascinated. No one cares to tell them that it is wickedly and maliciously false, or that its one object is to pander unscrupulously to the French passion for vilifying the fallen. The "man of Sedan" is shown in his true colours. So they say and think, poor people, and this photograph of a lying picture has also an extensive sale.

The cannon-balls and shells which have been converted into ornaments, or into articles of use, attract plenty of customers, too. In the course of an hour's stroll I

counted seven shops, in which these were among the articles displayed in the gay windows. Broken shells, with miniature views of Paris painted in oils upon their fractured sides; ponderous iron balls, to which lids have been fitted and bottles let in, and which are now inkstands, tobacco-boxes, snuff-cases, paper-weights, candlesticks, flower-pots, rings, pins, and brooches, all made out of the missiles by means of which Frenchmen were sent to their account by Frenchmen—command exorbitant prices. If the second siege of Paris, and the destruction of its noble national monuments by incendiaries, were matters for congratulation, there could not be greater joyousness, or more apparent pleasure in vaunting the evidences of what had been done. When we passed into the region of caricature, and set ourselves to collect specimens of the political cartoons which have been published in Paris during the last nine months, our task was envied with difficulty. It was dangerous to ask for, and still more dangerous to display and sell some of these. But we peered below the surface and persevered. We scoured the districts of La Chapelle, Belleville, and Montmartre, and whenever we found a print or newspaper shop, endeavoured to establish confidential relations with its proprietor. We frequently failed. Our noble British accent might be assumed—though I flatter myself an average Frenchman is far too sharp-witted to think that possible; or we might be English spies in the pay of Thiers; so the prints offered for sale were, as a rule, either of to-day, or of a period anterior to the Commune. The Emperor Napoleon in every attitude of ignominy: as a shoe-black at work on the boots of William; as a mendicant with pockets turned inside out to attract pity; as a thief making off with millions of the nation's money; as a traitor handing France over to murderers for pay; all these, and scores of others in the same vein, were produced without hesitation, whenever the shopkeeper had any of them remaining in stock.

The caricatures of the siege time were, we found, much in the same vein. Monsieur Jules Favre weeping copiously, and at the very same moment pocketing Bismarck's gold; Monsieur Thiers negotiating at foreign courts on behalf of the Committee of National Defence and slyly offering for sale a crown, for which the Orleans princes and the Count de Chambord are bidding; General Vinoy suppressing

half a dozen journals, and being bribed by the editors of others to let them alone; General Trochu studying his plan, and handing a large metal key over the walls of Paris to a figure in a Prussian helmet in exchange for a bag of gold—are specimens of the tone and taste of the comic draughtsmen whose productions were most widely appreciated by the people of Paris.

"Albums of the Siege" are to be bought in plenty, at all the best print-shops. They consist of highly coloured engravings, in which imaginary incidents of the siege are told; and where the Prussians, horse-flesh, the absence of gas, the coarseness of the bread, and the straits to which fashionable people were reduced, are told comically and broadly. There are albums, too, of the imperial menagerie, showing the late emperor and empress, and the ministers and favourites of their court, in the guise of the beasts and birds to which their public or private character is popularly supposed to give them affinity; as well as of the same people in the pillory, and with exaggerated and distorted heads. But these cost some francs each, and are intended for the libraries of those who are curious in such matters, and who can afford to collect. I wanted the back numbers of the cheap publications issued for and bought by the million, as reflecting day by day the passions, prejudices, and feelings which were uppermost. It was when we asked for those which appeared under the Commune that our difficulties began. They were all sold. There had never been any. The speaker was too much grieved at the infamies being perpetrated by the scoundrels in power (he himself having probably been the hero of a barricade) to think of his trade; and he was in consequence entirely ignorant of the prints and publications we spoke of. At last, after many protestations in bad French, after producing our passports and asking jocularly if we looked like spies, or emissaries of Monsieur Thiers or his police, we succeeded in some cases in establishing confidence. Then and not till then did the shopkeeper invite us to his dwelling room, and produce from far-away cupboards, and in one instance from the mattress of his bed, bundles of printed and pictorial matter. These were not for sale. We were to understand that clearly. They were part of the private collection of the speaker, and shown to us, his friends, as curiosities. He would, for his part, be sorry, indeed, to vend such atrocious ca-

lumnies on the administration, and so forth. It was odd to note how thoroughly it was understood that these things were literary curiosities, commanding a fancy price. A small bundle of halfpenny prints representing a daily publication of infamous character, which appeared and was suppressed under the Commune, could not be bought under two napoleons, or about two thousand per cent more than its cost.

The political cartoons of the same period, when the International ruled Paris, and while the Versaillists were kept at bay, were only parted with as a personal favour, backed up by a substantial consideration. These last were the only ones we met with which gave evidence of the serious purpose we are accustomed to see in our own great draughtsmen in times of national crisis. "The People learn their strength," is a giant Samson squeezing the lives out of the pigmy rulers he holds in each hand, while the Philistines in the persons of the leaders of the National Assembly are crushed beneath his feet; the "Departure of the Commune," is a figure of Death on the White Horse, waving a red flag, and leaving fire, blood, and destruction in his train. Others are blasphemous adaptations of the most awful incidents in sacred history to the purposes of the hour. Priests are the objects of special derision, as are the governing classes generally; but amid much that is indecent and much that is profane, it is impossible to deny that the popular caricatures published under the Commune have a reality and force about them which may be looked for in vain in other periods of France's recent agony. They are savage but earnest, and as such show with advantage against the miserable gibes against the emperor, and the personal calumnies which have been levelled against every other public man in turn. As we look over folio after folio of caricature, it seems as if we read the real history of this unhappy nation. Later, at the theatre where Theresa sings, attracting greater and merrier audiences than ever; at the café chantants, re-opened in the Elysian Fields, where the painted and bedizened women make their brave show upon the stage, and a comic Frenchman, dressed as a monthly nurse, favours us with his views on the relations of the sexes in France; by the ruins of stately edifices which crowds visit as a festal treat; in the gardens where toes are raised higher than ever, and the laughter is as the crackling of thorns under a pot;

in the streets, in the houses, on the Bourse, on the omnibuses, and in the cafés—you see Caricature. It is the mockery of woe, indeed; and remembering who these merry people are, and what they have just gone through, you think of the *Bals à Victime* of the first French revolution, and pronounce those around you to be worthy of their sires. In those dances, as Mr. Carlyle tells us, “the dancers have all crape round the left arm: to be admitted it needs that you be a victim, that you have lost a relative under the Terror. Peace to the dead; let us *dance* to their memory. For in all ways one must dance.” The thing which has been is the thing which shall be, and Paris and the Parisians have not altered a jot since then.

READING MADE EASY.

OVER the entrance of the great reading-room of the British Museum is appropriately placed the bust of the late Mr. Panizzi—the Founder, as he may be called. The huge domed hall behind him, his work and monument, is one of the wonders of Europe, now reaching to a considerable number.

The entrance to this hall is beset with difficulties. At the gate of the Museum, on a day when the reading-room only is open, the policemen and warders challenge the visitor with a “Reader, sir?” Allowed to pass, he crosses the open space, ascends the steps, enters under the portico, and finds himself at the great hall, with more police and warders. Any signs of indecision, and he is sure to be challenged, “Reader?” If he crosses boldly, and makes for the glass-door, where there is another janitor with a list, he is stopped once more and made to show his passport, unless he have what is called at the theatres, “a face admission.” Down the long passage he goes, gives up great-coat, stick, umbrella, parcels; passes through glass-swinging doors, past other detectives, and finds himself in the monstrous cathedral dedicated to learning, and, as some say, also to idleness.

It would be hard to give an idea of the first coup d’œil; for there is literally nothing like it. It has the look nearly of a cathedral, with all the comfortable, furnished air of a “sang” library. Colouring for the sides is furnished by rows of the books themselves which run round the walls to a height of some forty or fifty feet, and are reached by two light galleries.

In the centre of the room is a round counter, within which sit the officials, and which communicates with the library outside by a long avenue shut in by glass screens. Outside this counter is another, which holds the enormous catalogue, reaching to some hundred volumes; and from this second counter radiate the desks for the readers. Nothing more comfortable or convenient can be conceived. You have a choice in seats even: hard smooth mahogany or softly cushioned; both gliding smoothly on castors. In the upright back of the desk is a little recess for ink and pens, steel and quill; and on each side a leathern handle. One of these pulls out a reading-desk, which comes well forward, and swings in any direction, or at any height: the other forms a ledge on which books can be piled up and be out of the way. A blotting-pad, paper-knife, and convenient pegs under the table for putting away hats, &c., complete the conveniences. There are over five hundred of these, each having a number and letter. There are, besides, a number of what might be called “research” tables—small, low, flat, and broad, which an antiquarian may have all to himself; and the lid of which lifting up, he finds a convenient repository where he can store away all his papers, notes, and books until he returns the next day. Some of the more retired of the long benches are reserved “for ladies only;” but they do not seem very much to care for such seclusion.

Round the room, and within easy reach, is a sort of free library, where every one can help himself. This, as will be imagined, consists of books of general reference, and is very judiciously chosen. It comprises dictionaries of all languages, the best, newest; encyclopædias of every conceivable sort; long lists of the old magazines, like the *Gentleman’s Annual Register*, &c.; ambitious collections of universal science and knowledge, such as the *Panthéon Littéraire*, and *Diderot’s Encyclopædia*; histories of towns and counties in profusion, and the best and most favourite text-books in the respective classes of law, theology, medicine, mathematics, physiology, &c. The only weak place is the class of English belles-lettres and biography, which is ordered after a very random and arbitrary fashion, comprising such poor books as *Beattie’s Life of Campbell*, but not *Moore’s Life of Sheridan*, having *Twiss’s Life of Eldon*, and no *Life of Sterne*, and being without *Mrs. Oliphant’s remarkable Life of Irving*.

In fact, it would be hard to say on what principle the choice is made.

Having chosen a seat—and if you come late in the day you have to take a long, long walk seeking one—go to the catalogue for your book. And here we may pause to survey this wonderful catalogue, a library of folios in itself. Every volume is stoutly bound in solid blue calf, with its lower edges faced with zinc, to save wear and tear from the violent shoving in of the volumes to their places. On every page are pasted about a dozen neatly lithographed entries, and between the pages are guards, so as to allow fresh leaves to be put in, as the catalogue increases. As the guards are filled up the volume is taken away and rebound with fresh guards, so it becomes an illustration of the famous Cutler stocking, with this difference, that the stocking is gradually increasing in size. Nothing can be fuller than the arrangements for this catalogue, as it even refers you for a biographical notice of a well-known man to some of those little meagre accounts prefixed to collections of their poems, and to biographical notices and reviews. It also, to a great extent, helps the student to the real names of those who have written under assumed ones. This is the new catalogue, but there is an old one partly in print and partly in manuscript, and both must be consulted if you wish to make your search exhaustive. Periodical publications make a department in themselves under the letter P, filling some twenty folio volumes, to which there is an index, also in many folio volumes. London has nearly one folio to itself, Great Britain and France each several. Every entry is complete, title in full, date, place of publication, and a press mark, such as $\frac{645 \text{ a } 10}{3}$, which

is to be copied on a little form like the following:

Permission to use the reading-room will be withdrawn from any person who shall write, or make marks on any part of a printed book or manuscript belonging to the Museum.

Press Mark.	Heading and Title of the Work required.	Place.	Date.	Size.
.10854. b.	{Memoirs of Mrs. Piozzi Hayward.}	London.	1862	Octvo.

John Smith (Signature).

Date, Feb. 9, 1871.

K. 2 { Number of the }
Reader's Seat.

Please to restore each volume of the catalogue to its place as soon as done with.

On the other side are these directions:

READERS ARE PARTICULARLY REQUIRED

1. Not to ask for more than *one work* on the same ticket.
2. To transcribe from the catalogues all the particulars necessary for the identification of the work wanted.
3. To write in a plain, clear hand, in order to avoid delay and mistakes.
4. To indicate, in the proper place on each ticket, the number of the seat occupied.
5. To bear in mind that no books will be left at the seat indicated on the ticket unless the reader who asks for them is there to receive them.
6. When any cause for complaint arises, to apply at once to the superintendent of the reading-room.
7. Before leaving the room, to return each book, or set of books, to an attendant, and obtain the corresponding ticket, the reader being responsible for the books so long as the ticket remains uncancelled.

N.B. Readers are not, under any circumstances, to take a book or manuscript out of the reading-room.

Having given in the ticket, the reader may return to his place, certain of having to wait at least half an hour, and he may amuse himself watching the smooth running carts laden with volumes, which arrive every moment, and the attendants who are seen hurrying along through the glass screen, each with his pile of books, with their labels fluttering. Considering that some of these have to walk three-quarters of a mile along passages and up steep stairs to fetch some remote book, and that often the forms are imperfectly filled, the delay is not surprising. A more intelligent, willing, and obliging class of men cannot be conceived, always ready to volunteer assistance, even outside their special duty. It is pleasant to see how they exert themselves for novices, or for certain old veterans, filling up their forms for them.

The readers are a very singular and motley class. And here it is that some reform is wanting. A great deal of the time and trouble of the staff is taken up with supplying the wants of young boys and girls, and general idlers, who come to read novels and poetry, and take up the places of others who have real business. It cannot be supposed that the nation meant to pay for books and attendants, merely to wait on this useless class. A reform in the way of classification would be useful, the putting these drones in a department of their own, and with one attendant only to wait on them all. Every book ought to be procured within ten minutes, and by a system of speaking tubes and small lifts, the matter could be much simplified. The Museum would run fewer risks from the abstraction of books, by limiting the number of readers. There are many traditions in the Museum of these robbers, some of whom were always

suspected, but to whom the matter never could be brought home: while there was a "gentleman" who was not suspected, but was at last discovered. A Museum book is fortunately very unmarketable, it is so stamped all over; and if a volume had two hundred illustrations, every one would bear this mark. To all libraries come people with a mania for cutting out prints, and at this one, on a stand made purposely, are exhibited two maimed and defaced books, thirty or forty leaves torn out, with an inscription explaining how they were placed there as a warning, &c. This exhibition is a little undignified, and it seems quite purposeless. The evil-doers would only chuckle at it, while the well-conducted have no need of such reminders.

The habitués are a curious class. Some, as we have seen, are mere idlers, who come to read story-books in a comfortable room, but the true bookworm is found here in perfection. There is the shabby man, who has read himself blind over old Latin and French books, and who, at this moment, has his face bent to the table over a tiny duodecimo, the print being about an inch from his eye. Here is the mouldy old antiquary, very dirty, with metal spectacles, delving and grubbing in a very pit of books, with bleared eyes, wrinkled cheeks, and toothless gums, and yet he will work on till he tumbles into the grave. A familiar figure is that of the tall Don Quixote-looking man, who wears jack-boots and a black serge "soutane," or gown. He has a table to himself, covered with little vellum-bound books in all languages, and with notes and little manuscript books, all in the neatest penmanship. Here is a dapper man, with a sale catalogue and pencil, who is comparing books he is about to purchase with the copies in this national Museum. Here are men copying old music, sketching from the print books, tracing maps, handwriting, what not. But what strikes us especially is the diligent book manufacture going on, proofs being corrected, and manuscript set in order on every side. Not less characteristic are the ladies; and here we shall find in perfection the strong-minded woman, with spectacles and curls, and a determined bearing. There are also many nice-looking girls, who go fluttering about fearlessly, fetching their own books. They are fond of coming and working in company with a husband or sweetheart, when a deal of whispering and comparing notes goes on. But considering that there are often five or six hundred people in the room, the be-

haviour of every one concerned is wonderful for propriety, and the room is for the most part as quiet and orderly as if it were a church.

SAINT SWITHIN.

THE green ears droop, brown are the leaves,
The dust is thick upon the eaves,
The babbling brook has long been dry.
Parched is the earth; the glowing sky
Shows not one cloud athwart the blue,
The unbent rays pierce through and through
The thickest covert. All in vain
The dying flowers sigh for rain,
For rain, sweet, freshening, balmy rain.

No more from larch the throats sing,
Even the skylark folds his wings;
Mute are the reed-birds in the fen,
Mute in the willow bole the wren,
The jay in hedgerow makes no stir,
The magpie shelters in the fir,
The kingfisher and heron in vain
Seek river-bank, and pine for rain,
For rain, sweet, blessed, balmy rain.

It comes, it comes! Life-giving shower!
Chirps every bird, expands each flower;
It comes, the long-wished boon divine,
Dew pearls upon the gables shine;
It sparkles on the glistening leaves,
It wipes the dust-blight from the eaves,
All earth revives, and sings again,
Glad pean for the gift of rain,
Rain, rain, sweet, freshening, balmy rain.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

(SECOND SERIES.)

THE WRECK OF THE JUNO.

WHEN the second canto of Don Juan appeared, some of the minor critics accused Lord Byron of having stolen his fine description of the wreck of the Spanish vessel. Some of the most pathetic incidents were, indeed, as Tom Moore confesses, discovered in a little pamphlet entitled *Narration of the Shipwreck of the Juno on the Coast of Arracan in the year 1795*, which had been favourite reading amongst the boys at Doctor Glennie's school at Dulwich, to which Byron went in 1799. But Byron assured Mr. John Murray and Mr. Hobhouse that the various incidents of the loss of the vessel were taken from the narratives of various wrecks, to wit, those of the Juno, the Hercules, the Centaur, the Abergavenny, the Sydney, the Wellington transport, the Pandora, the Lady Hobart, the Betsy, the Thomas, and the Peggy. But the following account of the wreck of the Juno, with the preservation of fourteen of the crew during twenty-three days of entire famine, will show that for all that was most extraordinary and most touching in such narratives, Byron was indebted to Mr. William Mackay's intelligent and thoughtful account of the loss of the timber

vessel, in which he was second-mate on the coast of India.

The *Juno*, having at Rangoon taken in a cargo of Burmese teak wood for Madras, set sail on the 29th of May, 1795. She was a ship of four hundred and fifty tons burthen, very much out of repair, and in all respects badly provided for sea. The crew consisted of fifty-three men, chiefly *Lascars*, with a few Europeans, and there were also on board the captain's wife, her maid, a native girl, and some Malay sailors; in all seventy-two souls.

From the first everything went ill. Beating out of the Sirian river with the young ebb, in five to seven fathoms water, with soft mud, the cranky vessel shoaled suddenly about six P.M., to a quarter less five fathoms. Immediately ordered about, the helm was scarcely alee when she struck (out of Scylla into Charybdis) on a sand bank. All was hove back to get her off, but in vain. Both bower anchors were then let go to prevent her driving; one cable parted, and the second anchor she dragged, but the sheet anchor being let go, it bit, and the ship brought up. It was the last quarter ebb, so with struck top-gallant yards and masts, although she lurched over dangerously at low water, the *Juno* floated off with the flood. The anchors were hove up, and the unfortunate ship stood away under a press of sail into deep sea, and, as she made no water, every one hoped the rickety craft had not received any mortal injury. Unfortunately for her shaky timbers, a south-west gale commenced the next day (June the 1st), with a very high sea. She laboured and strained, and very soon sprung a leak. This gale lasting six days, it needed the incessant labour of all hands, working in alternate gangs, to keep the ship free, the pump-gear being overworked, and getting frequently out of order. To add to the misfortunes of the *Juno*, the owners had been so disgracefully and blindly careless of the ship's safety as to put no carpenter on board, and scarcely even any carpenter's tools; the sailors, however, contrived to repair the pumps, which, in spite of all expedients, kept constantly choking with the sand ballast. The captain and officers held several consultations about whether or not to return to Rangoon; but the danger of that low lee-shore (not visible at all till ten or twelve miles off, when the water was only seven fathoms), made the majority decide, as long as any hope remained, to keep her well off the Burmese coast. On the 6th the gale abated, the

ship made less water, only one pump was kept going, and every one, though anxious, grew hopeful. It is true there was a palpable hole between wind and water along the stern-post, but the first calm day some men got out in the jolly-boat and nailed some tarred canvas and oakum over it, with sheet-lead over all. This at first succeeded so far that, in smooth weather, the *Juno* required pumping only about once in a watch. The crew congratulated each other on having effectually stopped a threatening leak, and proceeded cheerfully on their voyage. Hope is blind: how could a mere piece of canvas keep out the seas of the Bay of Bengal in the very middle of the south-west monsoon? Better ten such lee-shores at Rangoon than that. They were, however, soon to be undeceived. The pump-gear was scarcely repaired when, on the 12th of June, a fresh south-west gale commenced with renewed fierceness; all went wrong again, the ship relapsed and made more water than before, the pumps rapidly choked, and the gear was spoiled. The men worked for their lives at three pumps, a bucket also was kept hard at it baling, and those who knew anything of carpenter's tools worked with them, and at the pumps, alternately. Towards the 16th, almost exhausted with fatigue and want of rest after the toil of four days and nights, the captain and officers, now painfully alive to their extreme danger, determined to set all the sail they could carry to keep her away, so as to fetch, if possible, the nearest coast of Coromandel, proposing afterwards to coast it along to Madras, or to bear up for Bengal, as should then seem safest and best. They accordingly set the close reefed topsails and courses and bore up, but the pumps required such close labour to keep down the deadly leak, that it was not in the men's power to properly watch and guard the sails. The natural consequence was, that before the 18th they were all blown from the yards, except the foresail, with which they contrived to lay to till the 20th, being in latitude seventeen degrees, ten minutes, north, and, by reckoning, nine miles west of Cape Negrakis.

The ship now pitched so deeply and heavily, that it was with difficulty the frightened men could be persuaded to keep their stations. About noon, however, there was a gleam of hope, for she wore, and the foresail being hauled up she kept before the wind under bare poles. Great and united efforts were then again made with the pumps and buckets, in hopes to clear her, but all in vain. About eight the men

came up from below, pale and hopeless, bringing the news that the water had reached the lower deck, upon which the Lascars abandoned themselves to passionate despair; and even the Englishmen grew silent. The idea was now general that the ship would soon sink to the bottom, owing to the weight of the wet sand ballast under the timbers, and there was one universal cry among the sailors to at once get out the boats.

The boats were, unhappily, useless; for both the old jolly-boats and the six-oared pinnace were shattered and leaky. The captain therefore ordered the mainmast to be cut away to lighten the ship; and, if possible, to delay her sinking till daybreak. About nine o'clock the mast was felled, but unfortunately the lamper of it fell on deck, and in the scramble and confusion the man at the helm let the ship broach to, and the furious sea made a clear breach over her. At this critical moment Mrs. Bremner, the captain's wife, who had been in bed below, ran up the hatchway; Mr. Wade, the chief mate, and Mr. William Mackay, a brave and intelligent young Scotchman, the second officer, helping her to the quarter-deck rail. They were in the act of making the poor frightened woman fast in the mizen rigging, when the ship came to her utmost bearings, and instantly, without more warning, began to settle down. All hands scrambled up the rigging to escape instant death, moving gradually higher and higher as the ship sank deeper. Captain Bremner, his wife, Mr. Wade, and Mackay, with a few others, clustered in the mizen-top. All the rest, but one man, who stuck to the foretop, clung about the mizen rigging. Mrs. Bremner, having no covering but a shift and petticoat, complained much of cold, so Mackay, being better clothed than her husband, pulled off his jacket and gave it her. Finding the vessel did not sink, the survivors now pulled out their knives and began to cut away the yards and rigging from the mizen-mast, to lessen the dangerous weight it had to carry. Though the ship rolled so violently that it was with difficulty these miserable men on the very edge of the grave could hold themselves fast, many of them, worn out with fatigue, went to sleep before day broke.

Mackay, from whose family Dr. Charles Mackay, the poet, is descended, has written a sensible and unaffected narrative of this interesting shipwreck. He says: "At first there did not appear to me the smallest ground of hope; yet, after two or three

hours' reflection, it occurred to me that some vessel might heave in sight in the morning. I felt perfectly resigned to my fate, which seemed inevitable; but from the moment I indulged a hope of being saved, I could not endure the idea of an untimely death, and listened the remainder of the night in anxious expectation of hearing a gun, several times imagining I actually heard one; and whenever I mentioned this to my companions, each fancied he heard the same report." At daybreak, one of the men calling out what he wished he saw, and therefore believed he saw, the Mussulmen began to shout "Allah! Allah!" which, reminding the Englishmen of the thanks due to God for the deliverance apparently at hand, they endeavoured to fall to prayer. But hope had deceived the man's sense of sight, as it had deceived Mackay's sense of hearing. This was the most exquisite pang in all their sufferings.

Day broke on a scene which seemed like a glimpse of purgatory. The wind had risen to a furious gale, the turbid sea was rolling mountains high. The miserable Juno, tormented by wind, wave, and all their invisible spirits, was threatening every moment to part in pieces. The upper deck and the upper part of the hull were rapidly separating, and the fragile rigging, to which seventy-two miserable wretches still clung, was fast giving way. The shrieks of the women, and of the Lascars, even more helpless than they, rose higher than even the screaming and mocking wind. Some let go their hold in paralysed despair, while others, resolute but weak, were washed one after the other from the rigging.

The rest were reserved for trials yet more dreadful. Three days the gale raged with unabated fury, and each day's sun brought fresh misery to the starving men. They all felt now that they would remain there clinging to the wreck till famine, with its withered hand, should pluck them off. A horrible thought now rose in every mind, though for a long time confessed by no one, not even in whispers, that the time must soon come when the survivors must prolong their lives by eating the flesh of those who died before them. The gunner (a Roman Catholic) was the first to ask Mackay, if he thought there would be any sin in having recourse to such an expedient. The mizen being dangerously crowded, some of the men left it, and trying to swim forward to the foretop, three or four perished in the endeavour.

Mackay, the well-educated son of a clergyman in Sutherlandshire, maintained a magnanimity worthy of his staunch and steadfast race. His agitation of mind and his regret at having encouraged false hopes, he tells us, gradually, after a time, lapsed into a sort of callous, or rather sullen, indifference. "I tried," he says, "to doze away the hours, and wished, above all, for a state of insensibility. The useless lamentations of my fellow-sufferers provoked me, and, instead of sympathising, I was angry at being disturbed by them. During the first three days I did not suffer much from want of food, the weather being cool and cloudy, but on the fourth the wind abated, the clouds dispersed, and left us exposed to the scorching heat of a vertical sun, which soon roused me to the keenest sense of my situation." In Mackay the sensation of thirst soon began to be exquisitely painful, and he feared he was approaching the agony that some around him seemed already suffering. Having read, in Captain Inglefield's account of the wreck of the *Centaur* (seventy-four gun ship) in 1782, that the boat's crew had derived comfort from lying down by turns in a blanket dipped in sea water, he and many of his companions resorted to this expedient, and found that it refreshed them, the pores of the skin absorbing and filtering the sea water, and leaving the salt on the surface. This ingenious plan also served to occupy the men's minds, and kept them from despondency. The night of the fourth day Mackay had a most refreshing sleep, and dreamt of his good old father and the manse in Sutherlandshire. He dreamed he was in a raging fever, and that his father, dressed in lawn, and with a mitre like a bishop, was praying by his bedside in the well-remembered room in the bleak, friendly old house. Whilst his father continued praying the fever ceased, but whenever the prayer stopped the burning and pain returned. Then he thought his father came up, with a solemn air, to his bedside, and brought the sacrament, and just as Mackay rose, and stretched his fevered hand towards the blessed cup, he awoke, with a pang of horror, imagining that his father was dead, and now, even in heaven, was looking down in sorrow and in pity on the sufferings of his son. He remembered also how an uncle of his had once lost a son, and the misery that ensued, and the thought of what his own family would all suffer on his account made his heart heavy. Then he called to mind the old Bible, and all he had read in it, and the lessons his father

had taught him; that calmed his mind, and now stronger to suffer, he endeavoured to make his peace with God, and felt reconciled to death.

On the 25th (five days after the wreck of the *Juno*), two men died of hunger, which greatly affected the survivors. Hitherto the horrors had been chiefly those of imagination, now the terrible reality had them in its remorseless fangs. The first went off suddenly, the other languished some hours in great agony, being seized with violent vomitings, then with strong convulsions, which, in most of the cases, presaged a struggling death. The day was very hot, and the sea smooth as glass. The captain and chief-mate having always expressed great confidence in rafts, some of the men, faint as they were, set to work to construct a raft from the fore-yard, spritsail-yard, and some other small spars still towing to the wreck. It was finished next day about noon, and the scamen began to get upon it; the captain, observing their movement, hurried down from the mizen-top with his wife and Mr. Wade, the first-mate. Mackay, though not believing in the plan, followed the example of the rest; the raft being too small, the strongest men had the cruel necessity of forcing the weaker off and compelling them to return to the wreck. Just as the rope that held the raft to the wreck was about to be cut, Mackay asked Captain Bremner in what direction he supposed the land lay, and what probability he thought there was of their making it. The captain giving no answer, Mackay again endeavoured to persuade him and his wife to return to the wreck, but finding that no one would even listen to him, Mackay remained, and the sailors paddled the raft before the wind with pieces of plank which they had shaped into rude oars with their knives. They had not gone far when, finding the raft still overloaded, Mackay again renewed his remonstrances, and persuaded Wade to put back and return with him to the mast-head. The crew of the raft, quite willing to lighten the load on their frail barque, put back, and again pushing off, faded down below the horizon by sunset. While the raft was building Mackay had sometimes resolved to go upon her, believing that death in twenty-four hours would be the inevitable result; but he had at last vanquished the temptation, and God had sent him patience and resignation to bear the will of Providence.

At daybreak of the 27th the watching men were astonished to see the raft again

alongside them on the opposite quarter from which it had set out. The crew had paddled all night, till their scanty strength was gone, then they had drifted at random, and at daylight, finding themselves still near the ship, had resolved to return to the mast-head. Soon after his return Captain Bremner began to be delirious, which so alarmed his wife that she fell into convulsions as he clasped her violently in his arms. He was a strong, vigorous man, rather past middle age, and his wife was a delicate young woman, to whom he had not been married more than eleven months. At first the sight of his wife had seemed to have given him great pain, as he reproached himself with having brought one he loved so much into such danger, but now, in his frenzy, it required force to tear her from his arms. He raved about a table he saw covered with all sorts of choice meats, and stormed because his comrades in misfortune did not give him this or that dish. Fearing the consequences, Mackay abstained as long as possible from salt water, though the furious heat seemed to burn him internally. At last, thinking death to be at hand, he went down from the mast and drank nearly two quarts. To his great astonishment, however, and delight, the supposed poison, instead of injuring him, revived his strength and spirits. He fell into a sound, peaceful sleep; the inward heat for a time abated. It is true the water purged and griped him, but the benefit he received was great.

On the morning of the 28th, Mr. Wade, in a sudden fit of desperation, declared he could bear his sufferings no longer, and would start on the raft if Mackay would accompany him; any death, he said, was preferable to that they were enduring. Mackay, more resolute and self-contained, refused to go, and tried to dissuade the doomed man. Wade then prevailed on two Italian helmsmen, two Malays, and three or four Lascar sailors, to join him. They pushed off the raft; in a few hours they were out of sight. In the evening a squall came on with the darkness, and in that, in all probability, they perished. This squall, that brought death to the men on the raft, brought life and hope to those on the wreck, for Mackay and the rest, spreading out their clothes, from which the heavy rain soon washed the salt, squeezed the fresh water out of them, and gained such life and vigour, that for a time, cheered as if by draughts of wine, they almost forgot their misery and their despair. After this there was a shower nearly every forty-

eight hours, and in the intervals, when the men had not strength enough to descend below, they lowered their jackets or pieces of cloth, with which to wrap round their fevered bodies. The poor wretches clinging thus desperately to life, also contrived to increase their saliva by chewing pieces of canvas, or of lead. They would no doubt have eaten their shoes, had they not partly adopted the Lascar habit, never wearing shoes when it rained, as leather dressed in India is soon spoiled by wet. The few pieces of leather about the rigging were too loathsome in smell and taste to be eaten even in that dire necessity.

After all Mackay suffered, he confesses that the imagination far exceeded the reality. At first, not thinking it possible to live more than a day or two without food, he was astonished to find his life protracted, and every hour expected the commencement of his mortal agonies. A few hours more, he thought, looking round silently at his groaning fellow-sufferers, and we shall be tearing the flesh from each other's bones. This terrible dread of the future reconciled him to the agony of the present. Many of the men died delirious, and it was Mackay's constant prayer to God that his reason would be spared to the last. He longed for death, yet dreaded the moment of soul and body parting, and trembled at being the last survivor. Every moment new horrors arose, as if to torture those unhappy men clinging forlornly to that half-sunk wreck in the lonely sea. The dead body of one of the Lascars got jammed among the ropes, and could not be disengaged for several days.

On the morning of the eleventh day, July the 1st, poor Mrs. Bremner woke to find her husband dead in her arms, and so weak were the survivors by this time that it was with the greatest difficulty they could contrive to throw the body overboard, after stripping off some of the dead man's clothes for his unhappy wife. During this fatal day two more men died in the mizen, and two more in the foretop. Death was looming nearer and nearer now. For some time Mackay and the men in the mizen had been too weak, to either descend the rigging, or to shout to their comrades on the foretop. Some of the Lascars had gone forward; the total number of survivors was so few that the two tops held them all, and there the poor fevered, starving wretches clung.

It grew worse and worse. Mackay remembers little after that; the sensation of hunger was lost in that of weakness, but

when rain fell the men were comparatively easy. The nights grew more chilly, and the weaker the men grew the more they suffered from the cold. The cold heavy rains after sunset benumbed them, their teeth chattered, and they sometimes feared they should all perish together from exposure. When the sun rose, however, the heat gradually rendered their limbs pliant; the spirits of these staunch seamen revived, they indulged in conversation, and sometimes became even cheerful. Then gradually the heat increased to a meridian furnace, and in that furnace of burning air and scorching blindness, their purgatorial torments began again, and they wondered how they could ever have wished the cold and paralysing night rains to have ceased.

Kind death stole in, and hurried off more victims. Some struggled hard, wrestled for life, and died in bitter agony. Nor, as Mackay shows in his narrative of a most affecting instance, did the weakest always seem to die the easiest. Mr. Wade's cabin-boy, a stout, vigorous lad, died easily, and almost without a groan. Another boy of the same age, but paler and more weakly, held out long. The fathers were both together in the foretop. When the first boy died, the father, told of his son's illness, replied, with torpid indifference, "I can do nothing for him." The other, touched to the quick, hurried down, weak and starving as he was, and, watching long for a favourable moment, crawled on all fours along the weather gunwale to his son in the mizen rigging. Only three or four planks of the quarter-deck just over the weather quarter-gallery remained, but to this spot the father brought the lad, making him fast to the rail, lest he should be washed away. When ever the boy was seized with a fit of vomiting the father lifted him up with all a woman's tender care, and wiped away the foam from his lips; if a shower came he made him open his mouth to receive the cool drops, and softly squeezed them into it from a piece of rag. In this situation both remained four or five days, till the lad expired. The unfortunate father sat gazing long and wistfully at the pale face, as if unable to realise the fact, and so remained watching it in silence, till a sea came, and carried the corpse, as if in pity, away. Then he rose, wrapped himself in an old sail, sank down, and rose no more, though he lived four days longer, his limbs being seen to quiver when a wave broke over him. This scene made an impression even on men now dead to the world, and familiar with misery in every shape. Byron, who,

ashamed as he was to own the fact, after all had a heart, has sketched this incident with an irresistible pathos. It forms the eighty-ninth verse of the second canto of *Don Juan*:

And o'er him bent his sire, and never raised
His eyes from off his face, but wiped the foam
From his pale lips, and ever on him gazed;
And when the wish'd-for shower at length was come,
And the boy's eyes, which the dull film half glazed,
Brighten'd, and for a moment seem'd to roam,
He squeezed from out a rag some drops of rain
Into his dying child's mouth—but in vain.
The boy expired: the father held the clay,
And looked upon it long.

On the evening of July the 10th (twenty days, as far as they could calculate, since the luckless *Juno* was wrecked), some one muttered he saw something like land in the horizon to the eastward. The assertion was heard without emotion, and no one for a time woke from his torpor of despair to look east or west. Yet only a few minutes after, Mackay languidly raising his head to observe the faint grey line in the horizon, saw every eye turned towards it. They all continued looking, though not very earnestly, till night closed in, then all, after comparing observations, agreed that it was land.

Mrs. Bremner and others now eagerly asked Mackay his opinion, and if he thought there was yet a possibility of escape. Mackay had little hope; he replied that the line on the horizon to the east did not appear to him to be land; if it was, there was at least one comfort, that it would most likely soon put an end to their sufferings, as the wreck would certainly ground, and would be beaten to pieces in a few hours. On that account Mackay had been long dreading the sight of land, but now he had grown indifferent to anything, and incapable of any acute sensation either of joy or sorrow. "I remember," says Mackay, "that on waking at daybreak next morning I did not think of looking to see whether there was land in sight or not, till some one in the foretop waved a signal with a handkerchief that it was so. I then felt an inclination to get up and look; but happening to be in an easy position, with my arms folded so as to press my stomach, I was too indifferent to turn myself round. My neighbours were more affected; some one got up and declared it was land, which roused another, and, by degrees, all of us. It appeared to me like land, but still I was neither sure nor much interested about it." Mrs. Bremner then asked Mackay, who hitherto had kept such a brave heart and such a firm trust in God, if he thought it was the

coast of Coromandel. He replied sarcastically, thinking the question foolish: "If it is, you and I should be sent to the Long Room at Madras, and be there exhibited as curiosities, at so much a head, under the pictures of Cornwallis and Meadows." But as day grew on, the land rose so clear that no one could deny its existence, and Mackay began at last to feel some glimmering of hope, only alloyed by the horrible dread that they might only have been hitherto saved to now perish in sight of a friendly shore. In the evening they drifted so near as to perceive, with inexpressible anguish, that the coast was only a wild jungle, without any appearance of human beings. Mackay, expecting the wreck would strike every moment, then lay down to die. Sleep, however, soon closed his weary eyes, and at daylight he was woken by the ship striking a rock so violently as to shake the masts at every jolt. He had foreseen this, and prepared for death at last, the motion being so violent that no one could keep himself fast. The tide had now, however, fallen several feet. More beams of the upper deck being out of water, the survivors with some difficulty got down from the masts upon them. The gunner and Mackay endeavoured to save Mrs. Bremner, but she was too weak to help herself, and they were so weak that they were obliged to leave her.

By this time the tide sank lower. The ship no longer moved; the gun-deck was almost dry. The Lascars, descending from the foretop, were groping among the rubbish for money. Mackay instantly proposed to two of the strongest of these men to help down Mrs. Bremner, but they refused to do it for less than eight rupees, and that sum to be paid on the spot. This was the first time they had shown any want of feeling, but the sight of land had brought back all the greediness and vices of their daily life. After resting for some time on the orlop-deck, Mackay observed that the rudder-head had been knocked off, leaving a hole into the gun-room. As soon as the tide had left the orlop-deck, therefore, he and his friend rummaged the gun-room, but only found three or four rancid cocoa-nuts jammed under the timber. These were equally divided, the finder only claiming the oily juice as his reward. Mackay's constant thought now was of lemonade, not a short quick gulp, but a huge bowlful, to quench his thirst and fever, and when he thought of solid food, he longed for what he could swallow at once without any delay in chewing. There was still no pro-

spect of reaching the shore, and, of the two deaths, it seemed better to die quietly on the wreck, than to struggle to the land to be instantly torn to pieces by tigers. Now for the first time Mackay began to think there was yet hope for them if they remained on the wreck, and that God had prolonged their lives to send relief at last, since none had died since they first saw land. That very afternoon they observed something like men walking on the shore, but they took no notice of the shouting or of clothes waved from the taffrail, and passed on. This, however, roused the stronger of the Juno's crew, who, with infinite fatigue, lifted six spars from the gun-room into the water, and on these six of the younger Lascars, it being the young flood, through a heavy surf, gained the beach. Mackay saw them find a stream of water and drink, then lie down in despair. Next morning, however, they were seen again, but the survivors, two women, three old men, an invalid, a lad, and Mackay, were too weak to lower any more spars. About noon, to Mackay's joy, he saw some natives come on the beach, light a fire, and wave handkerchiefs to the wreck. Between hope and fear the survivors became half delirious. The gunner and serang were unable to lift a spar, but Mackay and a ship's boy at last tumbled one into the water. With much regret Mackay then overcame his fears of the surf, bade farewell to Mrs. Bremner, who was too weak to move, and leaping into the sea, clung to the spar. It being square, it kept rolling him under. Several times in utter despair he let go the timber, only to clutch at it again as he was sinking. Once a tremendous sea washed him from the spar, then washed him back upon it. At last, bleeding from the sand and shells, the poor fellow was thrown violently on the rocks, and, clinging to them fast, contrived to crawl on all fours, perfectly naked, beyond the reach of the surf. Chilled to the bone, he laid down under the lee of a rock and fell asleep, just as he observed some natives coming towards him. He was saved at last. Where he had been washed ashore was only six days' journey from Chittagong. The peasants tied a turban round him, and bore him to a stream, in which he fell and drank furiously. At the natives' fire he found six Lascars, the gunner, and a boy. In joy at seeing them safe, and at hearing of the Hindoos' humanity, Mackay grew for a time delirious. When the rice was boiled, Mackay could not at first swallow it, his lips and inside of his mouth being cracked and bleeding

with the heat. When he awoke from a refreshing sleep, he found that the natives had rescued Mrs. Bremner and her maid. There was great uncontrollable joy at the meeting round the fire. That very night the wreck parted in two, the bottom remaining on the rocks, the upper part floating so near the land that the two men left on board waded to the beach.

The conclusion of this interesting narrative must be briefly told. The Hindoos who conveyed the survivors to Chittagong, deserted Mackay, who walked slower than the rest, and he would have died but for the charity of a Portuguese pedlar going to Arracan, who gave him rice, onions, chillies, and tobacco, and taught him how to produce fire, to scare the tigers at night, by rubbing together pieces of bamboo. Eventually an English officer, commanding at Ramoo, hearing of his countryman's distress, sent a havildar and two sepoy to escort him safely to the settlement, where he was loaded with sympathy and kindness.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LXII. MAUD'S BEDROOM.

MERCY CRESWELL led the young lady by a back stair. She was interested; everything was so unlike Roydon. As they traversed the passage leading to the hall, the sounds of music again swelled faintly on her ear; and she saw servants going to and fro, in the corridor, in the fuss and jostle of trays, ices, and claret-cup and glasses, soup and tea-cups.

Up the stair went Maud and her femme de chambre, and the sounds died out. The stairs and passages were lighted, rather dingily, by small muffled lamps, which seemed to be fixed in the ceilings. Only at two points, on the level which they had now reached, a yard or two apart, did they encounter a living being. They were a pair of strong middle-aged housemaids, who, each in turn, stopped and looked at Maud with a transitory and grave curiosity as she passed.

"Isn't she pretty, poor little thing?" said the fatter of these two to her companion.

"Pretty and proud, I dare say; 'tis a good house she's come to; it won't do her no harm, I warrant you," answered the darker-visaged and leaner woman, following the young lady with a half-cynical smile.

They were now in the long passage through which, a few nights before, Doctor

Malkin had approached his room. A man in a waistcoat with black calico sleeves to it, seemed to be awaiting them at the other end, leaning against the great door that closed the perspective, with his arms folded, and one leg crossed over the other, an attitude in which we have seen ostlers smoking in inn-yards at stable-doors.

Seeing them, the man stood erect, with the key in his fingers.

"This way, please, Miss Maud," said Mercy, pushing forward, as she observed the young lady hesitate, as if doubtful whether she was to pass that barrier.

"Miss Vernon, A A Fourteen," said Mercy, briskly, to this janitor, who forthwith opened the heavy door.

They saw now before them the continuation of the long gallery which is interrupted by this massive door.

The man held out his hand as she gave him a little printed check; he looked at it, and said:

"Yes, all right, A A Fourteen." And he opened the first door to the left.

On a little disk of ivory sunk in the door-post, were the number and letters, but so small that you might not have observed them.

At home at last! There was Miss Vernon's luggage on the carpet. A muffled glass lamp, the same as those she had observed in the lobbies, only much more powerful, shed a clear light over every object in the room, from the ceiling.

It was the same room which had been assigned to Doctor Malkin, a short time before; but some alterations tending to improve the style and convenience of its arrangements had been made; and now it looked not only a spacious and comfortable, but even a handsome bedroom.

"Heaven defend us! What an awful picture that is!" exclaimed Maud, as she stood before the picture of the abbess, that was placed over the chimney-piece. "What a deathlike, dreadful countenance! Who is it? No relation of Lady Mardykes, I hope?"

"I don't know, indeed, miss," answered Mercy, thus appealed to. "I was never in this room before."

The krees, no suitable decoration for a lady's apartment, had been removed.

Maud turned away.

"I wonder why Lady Mardykes lights her rooms and galleries so oddly," she pursued, talking half to herself, as she looked up at the lamp in the centre of the ceiling; "I fancy myself in an immense railway carriage."

A dressing-room opened from this apartment, to the right, and beyond that lay Mercy Creswell's room, accessible in turn by a door from the dressing-room. Each of these rooms was lighted in the same way.

"Are all the bedrooms in this house marked with numbers and letters like this?"

"Every one, miss."

"I can't say I admire that arrangement, nor the lighting. One thinks of an hotel. If Miss Medwyn were here," she added, more merrily. "I should certainly, late as it is, dress and go down to the concert. I should like to see the dresses and the people. I fancy the house is very full."

"It is always that, miss; I never knew it hotherwise."

"And a very gay house?"

"Too gay for me, miss. Always something going on. A too much of a racket. I don't think it's good for no one," said Mercy, half stifling a dreary little yawn. She had not been laughing since their approach to the house, even at mention of Miss Medwyn's name; but on the contrary, as she would have said herself, was "rather in the dismals."

"Lady Mardykes's aunt is here; Mrs. Pendel, of Pendel Woods? You have seen her often, of course?"

"The Honourable Mrs. Pendel? Oh, dear, yes, miss, hoftentimes."

"She was here a day or two ago, certainly. Can you tell me whether she is here now?"

"No; she's not here now, miss."

"That's very odd, for Lady Mardykes wrote to beg of her not to go away. You had better go down and ask."

"No use in life, miss; I know she's not here—she's gone. We was talking about her this morning, before I left here."

"Well, it doesn't so much matter. Lady Mardykes will be here in the morning. Don't mind those dresses to-night; you can do all that in the morning; just lay my dressing-case there, and give me my dressing-gown. Thanks; and I think I'll go to my bed."

"Would you, please, like a bit of supper or something first, miss?"

"Nothing, thanks; but perhaps you would, Mercy."

"I had my supper, miss, thanks, at the Pig and Tinder-box. Servants never sups so late here, miss; it is against the custom of the house."

The young lady, in her dressing-gown and slippers, sat before the glass, with her

long, thick hair about her shoulders; and Mercy Creswell stood by, brush in hand, arranging it.

When all this was over the young lady, beginning to feel a little sleepy, was glad to get to her bed.

A double cord, with a ring like an old-fashioned handle of a bell-rope, hung by her bed, and the use of this Mercy Creswell explained. Drawing the cord in one direction had the effect of moving a shade under the lamp in the ceiling, and of thus reducing the room to darkness, and in the opposite direction of removing this shade again, and readmitting the light. Having tried this two or three times, and found that she could manage it perfectly, she dismissed her maid, lay down, and drew the shade; and the room being in total darkness, she addressed herself to sleep.

But there is a tide in the affairs of men other than that which Shakespeare wrote of at least, and which, taken at the flood, leads on to slumber, but which once passed may never come again for half a night; and Maud soon began to fear she had suffered it to escape her; for after lying for some time still, with eyes closed, she felt more wide awake than when she had first tried to sleep.

She turned on her other side, and lay still; but in vain she tried and exhausted all the common expedients for inducing sleep; they all failed.

An hour had passed, and sleep seemed further than ever.

Perhaps a question which mingled unbidden in all her speculations had something to do with the postponement of her sleep. Was she likely to see Mr. Marston next morning among the guests?

She was listening now with excited attention for far-off sounds of music; but the house was too vast, and if the concert was still going on, which was not indeed very probable, its harmonies were lost in distance long before they could reach her ear. The silence was intense, and more unfriendly to sleep than some little hum of distant life might have been.

Now and then came one of those odd creeks or cracks in the woodwork of the room, which spiritualists assign to mysterious causes, and more sceptical philosophers simply to a change of temperature; and ever and anon a moth would bob against the window-pane with a little tap. But these sounds were far enough between to be a little startling when they did come; and the silence of the long intervals was intense.

She listened; but not a footstep could she hear—not a distant barking of a dog, not a sound of life anywhere.

It was an oppressive and melancholy silence. At length she thought she heard a distant clock strike two, and the sound died away, leaving the silence deeper.

It continued. Some time passed. She lay in the dark with her eyes open, her head on the pillow, without a stir, but awake and excited.

But on a sudden her ears were startled by a loud and horrible sound.

Close to her door, in the gallery, there arose a howling and weeping, and a clang at the bolts of the massive cross door. This was followed by ironical laughter. Then came a silence, and then more of the same slow, jeering laughter, and then another silence.

Maud had started up in her bed, and sat with her heart throbbing violently, almost breathless, listening with the chill of terror.

To her relief this horrid sound next time was heard at a comparative distance. She heard other men's voices now in low and vehement dialogue, and sounds of shuffling feet, of gasping, tugging, and panting, as if a determined struggle was going on; once or twice, a low hugh was heard; and then came a yell loud and long, which seemed passing further and further away, and was soon lost quite in the distance; a door clapped, the place was silent.

For some minutes Maud was afraid to stir. But summoning courage she sprang from her bed, venturing to lock the door. But she could discover neither lock nor bolt; but, to her comfort, found that it was nevertheless secured. She made her way to the window; drew the curtain, opened the shutter a little, and looked out.

CHAPTER LXIII. MORE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS.

THE moon was low now; all was motionless and silent. Long shadows were thrown from the tall hedges and trees upon the misty grass; and the croquet-ground and flower-garden, with all the pleasant anticipations associated with them, lay full in view beneath.

Encouraging the cheerful train of thought to which this prospect gave rise, she sat in her dressing-gown and slippers for some time at the window, and then, intending to question Mercy Creswell on the subject of the uproar that had so scared her, and no doubt her maid also, she tried the dressing-room door; but the handle at this side was gone, and the door fast shut.

So she must be content to wait till morning, for an explanation of the noises that had startled the unusual quiet of the night.

I dare say she would soon have grown drowsy, for she really needed sleep, and the healthier associations that were by this time, again, uppermost in her mind, would have prepared the way for its approach, had she not again been disturbed, just as she was about to return to her bed, by noises which she could not account for.

This time they proceeded from the quadrangle under her window; men's voices were talking low, and steps were audible on the gravel walk that runs along that side of the house.

She placed herself close to the glass and looked down.

The terrace that passes under the windows, the same along which she had that night approached the house, is very broad, affording a wide belt of grass between the gravel walk and the wall of the house. This distance enabled her without difficulty to observe the people who were now on the path.

The elevation of this terrace raised it above the level of the shadows, and in the vivid moonlight, she saw the figures that appeared, distinctly. The window from which she was looking was as nearly as possible over the door through which she had entered the house.

Some half-dozen men, with their hats on, were waiting on the broad walk before it. Two or three more in a short time came out from the house and joined them. Then three gentlemen dressed in those black cloaks, with which undertakers drape chief mourners, entered the terrace walk, from the point at her left, at which the door from the court-yard communicates with it. They were walking very slowly side by side, and he who was in the middle had a handkerchief in his hand, and appeared to be weeping.

They passed the window, and the group of men on the walk drew back toward the house as they did so; and the three gentlemen in black continued to walk slowly up and down that portion of the promenade that lay to her left.

The group of men who are standing before the door breaks up: some half-dozen go into the house, and only three remain where they were.

Maud is becoming more and more curious.

A man whose square build looks squarer, as she looks down upon him, steps out. He looks along the terrace after the three men

who are walking down it. He looks up towards the moon. There is no mistaking that pale still face, with the jet-black beard. He is Automarchi.

The three gentlemen turn about, and are now approaching him. He advances two or three steps toward them, and takes off his hat, and makes a particularly low and ceremonious bow. One of these gentlemen advances at a quick pace, makes him a bow in return, and they talk together. The other two continue to pace, as before, slowly up and down the walk.

Automarchi approaches the door, and the gentleman who joined him a few minutes before is at his side. They stop. The three men who were lounging near the door are suddenly, as it were, called to attention. Automarchi waves his hand slightly towards the door, and says something to his companion, who turns about, and at his quickest walk rejoins his two friends.

These gentlemen, hearing what he says, stop and turn about, and slowly walk towards the door. There is some little fuss there; first one and then another man emerges from it and returns, and now, with white scarfs and hat-bands, bearing a long coffin on a bier, come forth the men who had gone in. A man steps out last, and shuts the door softly. Is it Darkdale? She can't be quite sure.

It is not easy to distinguish colours, at any distance, by moonlight; but Maud thinks that this coffin is covered with red velvet, and that the large plate and big nails upon it are gilded.

Immediately behind this coffin the three gentlemen walk, and Automarchi after them, till it disappears round the corner of the house, away to her left, at which the door she had passed that night gives access to the court-yard.

A strange feeling of disgust and fear now, for the first time, steals over her. What is she to think of a house in which, while an inmate lies dead and confined, all the fiddling and singing, and vanities and feasting of a banquet, proceed unchecked? What is she to think of the right feeling and refinement of a hostess who can permit so extraordinary a profanation?

The sombre images summoned to her fancy by the scene she has just witnessed, gave for the time a sickly character to the moonlit prospect, and the now solitary walk so lately traversed by the scanty and mysterious funeral procession.

Maud left the window, and drew the shade from the lamp, and in a moment the warm light filled the room cheerily.

Closing the shutters, and drawing the curtains, she now bethought her seriously of the necessity of getting a little sleep, if she did not intend looking like a ghost next morning, which certainly was very far from her wish.

So into her bed she got again, and drawing the cord once more, the light vanished, and she lay down determined at last to go to sleep.

All was profoundly silent again, and Maud was now, after the lapse of some eight or ten minutes, beginning at last to feel the approaches of sleep, when she fancied she heard something brushing very softly by the great arm-chair near the side of her bed.

Was she ever to get to sleep in this unlucky bed? Even the idea that a cat had got into her room was not pleasant; for nursery tales of the assassin-like propensities of the tribe (especially of black cats, and why should not this one be black?) when their tendency to throttle and murder sleepers in the dark was favoured by opportunity, crowded upon her recollection.

She listened intently. She heard in a little time a slight click, as if a trinket or coin was stirred on the table near. There was no other noise, and nothing very formidable in that. But still she could bear the uncertainty no longer. The darkness and silence were oppressive; she put her hand out and drew the cord, and in an instant the soft light from the lamp in the ceiling filled the room, and disclosed every object.

She was not alone. A figure, perfectly still, was standing about a yard from the side of the bed, toward the foot. She stared at it for some time, hardly believing that what she saw was real, before she recognised in the short squat person in a woollen night-gown, Mercy Creswell, her ugly *femme de chambre*.

"How on earth did you come in?" at length Maud exclaimed.

"La! miss, how?" repeated Mercy, who gained a little time for reflection by such repetitions. "How did I come in? I came as quiet as I could, through the dressing-room door, please, miss."

"What do you want here, please?" demanded Miss Maud, a little peremptorily, for she was losing patience. "I did not call for you, and I think I should have been asleep by this time, if you had remained quietly where you were. What do you want?"

"I? I came, miss—what I wanted was—I came to see was you sleeping comfort-

able, having been, as you was, complaining of your head."

"Well, don't mind trying to see in the dark any more please. I wonder you did not tumble over the furniture. You'd have frightened me out of my wits if you had; I have been made so awfully nervous. There were such horrible noises in the gallery, just outside my door; and I had hardly got over that, when, of all things in the world, a funeral passed out of this house."

"La! though *really*, miss?"

"Yes, *really*, such a grisly idea! Didn't you hear the people under the windows? What are you made of? But you *must* have heard the person who made such a hideous uproar in the gallery."

Maud paused with her eyes upon her.

"Well, I wouldn't wonder if it was, miss, that might easy be," said Mercy.

"But didn't you *hear* it; what can you mean by affecting to doubt it? You won't allow that you know, or see, or hear anything. You *must* have heard it."

"Yes, I did hear it," said Mercy, who resolved, at length, to be candid; "a man hollering and crying, and laughing, and I think I should know pretty well what it was, miss."

"That's just what I want you to tell me."

"Well, I heard this morning there's a servant of one of the great people here that's got fits and raving, saving your presence, miss, from drink."

"My gracious! that horrible complaint that Doctor Malkin told me about! And why don't they send him to an hospital?"

"So they will, miss, I'm told, in the morning."

"But what about the funeral? You were here this morning, and know the servants. It was evidently some person of rank, and you must have heard of it. A person of that sort could not have been lying dead in the house, without your knowing something of it."

"Well, no—*really*, miss, I knew there was some one, I forget his name, a lord, I do believe, lying very bad, some days ago, and gave over—and most like it is the same—but Lady Mardykes, she'll be here in the morning, she can tell you all about it."

"But do you mean to say that such things happen, in the midst of balls and concerts, in Lady Mardykes's house? Do you mean to say that if I had a fever and died here, Lady Mardykes would not suspend her gaieties till I was buried?"

"Oh! miss, la! you know, miss, Lady

Mardykes does things her own way. She's not that sort, neither; but there's a part of the house down at that end farthest from the hall-door, there is sometimes people in she does not know from Adam, saving your presence, miss."

"I don't in the least comprehend you," said the young lady, in unaffected amazement.

"I mean this, when people is ordered the waters here for a week, miss, there being no hotel, miss, nor inn, nor nothing of no sort, near Lady Mardykes's, if it should appen to be a lady or gentleman of consequence, a lord or a countess, or sich like, she would give them the use of a room or two in the house, you see, and so, now and then, of course, it can't be helped. There will be a lady or gentleman die, seeing all as comes to drink the waters is more or less sick and ailing always; and I have known a many a one die here."

"And without any interruption of the amusements—the music and dancing?" persisted Miss Vernon.

"La! none in life, miss, why should there? Let them go out as they come in, private. When you have seen as many corpses as I have, here, laid out in their caps and sheets, you'll think no more of them than you would of so many yellow wax statutes—what's a coffin but a box of cloth? If there's no one I don't care for in it, why should I fret my eyes out? Not I. I wouldn't look over my shoulder to see corpse or coffin; I wouldn't think twice about it; 'tis all fancy, miss."

"Well, as you say, I shall probably know all about it from Lady Mardykes to-morrow, and now, *really*, you must go; and pray don't return till it is time to call me in the morning. Good-night."

"Good-night, miss."

And the maid withdrew.

"Well," thought Maud as she lay down, "I have heard that Lady Mardykes keeps an odd house; but anything like this, could any one have conjectured?"

And very soon after this reflection Maud Vernon was fast asleep. 1871 P.

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CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

THE BOOK.

CHAPTER I. MISS CAVE'S LODGINGS.

OUT of the bright and busy High-street of Wexeter, parallel with the narrow little court leading to the cathedral, there runs a small street of small houses, leading into an open space, and flanked on either side by a crescent. Big, heavy, old-fashioned red brick houses, speaking of bygone times, when the gentry who have now established themselves in various country seats thought it no disgrace to dwell within the walls of the city, and when the peaceful and aristocratic quarter of South-Hedge, in which such as are left of them now reside, was by no means sufficient to contain them. At the present time, however, a different set of people is to be found in the crescent, and an eruption of brass plates has broken out amongst its heavy railings. Doctors are there, and even dentists, agents for insurance companies, and solicitors; some of the houses in the middle of the Eastern Crescent have been transformed into a chapel, and one at the westernmost corner has only narrowly escaped being converted into a shop. The half-glazed door with the word "office" on its window-pane has prevented this degradation; but when you have passed this Rubicon you find yourself in a place furnished with a counter, and shelves, and other appurtenances of a shop, shoppy.

How the builders of the theatre ever ventured to select a site for that structure in such a grave and decorous neighbourhood, it is difficult to imagine; but there it is at the other end of the crescent, and, truth to tell, not very far from the chapel. A square

building with medallions of the tragic and comic muses let into its front, and with an overhanging portico, on one side of which is situated the box-office, while on the other, during the daytime at least, Miss Bult, the milliner, plies her trade. Whether the situation and the surroundings have anything to do with it or not it is impossible to say, but it is a fact that the theatre at Wexeter always has stood high, not merely in the opinion of those engaged in it, which is of common occurrence enough, but in the estimation of those who dwelt around it, and on whose patronage it was greatly dependent. Great actors have been bred and educated on the circuit of which Wexeter was the principal town; the management of this circuit has been in one family for several generations, bequeathed from sire to son, and has always been carried on after the same regular, respectable fashion. These facts were of course known to the townspeople and the neighbourhood, but no stranger, wanting to engage a seat, could possibly have walked into the box-office, without being at once convinced of the respectability of the entire concern.

For in the box-office, with the box plan spread out before her, while she occupied herself either with knitting or berlin-work, or some humbler employment for her needle, sat Miss Cave during the whole of the day, looking, with her silver-rimmed spectacles, her pepper-and-salt "front," consisting of two large flat curls over each eye, and an impossible parting in the middle, her neat cap, and her muslin handkerchief crossed over her shoulders, the embodiment of respectability. There in the box-office she sat, as a guarantee for the style of entertainment for which she would sell you a seat. No one with such an appearance could have any connexion with burlesques, breakdowns,

or comic singing. The Highland Fling, in character, by Miss M'Alpine, the One Horse Shay, by special desire, on the occasion of his benefit, by the low comedian, or a variety of singing and dancing between the pieces when the bill was short, might be looked for; otherwise Shakespeare or Sheridan, with a staid, old-fashioned farce, formed the staple of the entertainment.

Miss Cave was an elderly lady, so old that none of the inhabitants of Wexeter had ever recollected her as anything else; tradition reported that her father had been in the choir, and had been specially noticed for his fine voice by George the Third, when that old monarch and Queen Charlotte paid their visit to the city. And it is certain that Miss Cave always maintained amicable relations with the authorities of the cathedral, attending divine service regularly every Sunday, and never meeting canons, deans, or even the bishop himself, without receiving a pleasant greeting and a few words of salutation. Indeed, on the occasion of Miss Cave's annual benefit, a large number of the resident clergy not merely sent their families, but were themselves to be found, seated in the dress-boxes of the theatre. The entertainment then provided never varied, commencing with one of Shakespeare's tragedies, concluding either with the Critic or the Trip to Scarborough. Miss M'Alpine knew that at such a time it would be useless for her to attempt to interpolate the Highland fling, and the low comedian perfectly understood that he would not be called upon to exercise his vocal powers.

Miss Cave lives in a bright little house, one of the row just beyond the theatre; a little house just high enough for its top windows to look over the old red brick wall of the deanery garden. With Miss Cave lived her brother Samuel, who had been for years unnumbered the recognised barber and perruquier of the theatre, and the temporary attendant on such of those great actors visiting it as did not bring their own servants. It was Mr. Samuel's boast that he had "wigged and painted" more "stars" than any other man out of London, but that he was getting a little tired of it now, a statement which, considering that most of his anecdotes were personal reminiscences of the elder Kean and his companions, might, as regards the latter portion of it at all events, be deemed veracious.

The brother and sister occupy the parlours and the attics of the little house; the drawing-room floor is generally let as lodg-

ings, either to the permanent members of the theatrical company, or to any distinguished artist engaged as a temporary attraction. At the present time they are occupied by a leading lady of the company, Miss Pierrepont, and her younger sister. Miss Cave has the highest opinion of Miss Pierrepont, not merely professionally, but privately. The old lady admires her lodger's appearance, voice, manner, and style of elocution, thinks she is a credit to the company, which has sent up some of the first leading ladies to the metropolis, and is only anxious lest any London theatrical manager should get a hint of the hidden treasure and come down to bear her away. But, above all, she admires Miss Pierrepont's modesty and the propriety of her private life. Some of Miss Cave's former lodgers have been given to "gallivanting" and "carryings-on," proceedings never explained by the old lady in other terms, but generally believed by her intimates to be in relation to the other sex, and too horrible to mention. Miss Pierrepont is given to none of these atrocities; she has very few visitors: none indeed beyond Mr. Dobson, the manager, Mr. Potts, the prompter, and young Mr. Gerald Hardinge, the scene-painter. She never goes out to supper, has no anonymous letters or flowers left for her, but spends all her time in working at her profession and finishing the education of her sister Rose.

Not that Miss Pierrepont might not have had admirers in plenty, bless you; Miss Cave knows that; gentlemen are constantly inquiring at the box-office who she is, and where she comes from, and the admiration evoked by her powers of acting is by no means confined to applause, but forms the topic of much conversation between the acts, as Miss Cave, hidden away in the little pay-box on the top of the landing, can hear very well through the pigeon-hole in front of her, where she takes the money and gives the change. The old lady has heard, too, that when Miss Pierrepont went to the party at Mrs. Probus's—Probus was a carriage builder and a Shakespearean enthusiast—she was made more of than any other woman in the room, which naturally accounted for her never having been asked again. But "nothing came of it," the old lady used to say, although she had expected that on the night after Probus's party, all the eligible young men of the town would have called at No. 9, The Precinct, prepared to lay their hands and fortunes at Miss Pierrepont's feet.

No, there was no one actually in love with her that Miss Cave could point to, unless it was Mr. Gerald Hardinge, the scene-painter, who was a mere boy, much too young for her. As the old lady remarked, she did not hold with making a great outcry about disparagement (by which she probably meant disparity) of years, but Miss Pierrepont must be at least six years older than Mr. Hardinge, and there were temptations enough for a man in the profession, without his having a wife so much his senior. And he was a deal too handsome, Mr. Hardinge was, to be exposed to temptations of any sort more than could be helped, Miss Cave thought; "having one of those heads, my dear, which would look so well cut off just above the shoulders, and without any shirt-collar, on a medallion at the south end of the choir." He was a kind-hearted lad, too, Miss Cave allowed, and generous with his money, when he had any, and gave little Rose Pierrepont lessons in drawing for nothing, and the elder sister was agreeable to him, and liked him very much, though the old lady "did not think there was anything between them."

It was a hot night, towards the end of June; the heat had been stifling and oppressive all day, and the windows of Miss Cave's lodgings were thrown wide open, for the admittance of as much air as could be found. This was little enough, but such as it was it came laden with a thousand odours from the flowers in the deanery garden, rejoicing the heart of Rose Pierrepont, the sole occupant of the room, who was seated at a table, drawing, by the light of a shaded lamp, and who raised her head from time to time, and glanced now at the open window, then at the closed door. As far as could be seen of her in her sitting position, a girl slight and small in figure, with a small head, delicate features, and large dark eyes. Her age was about sixteen, and she looked even younger, and the manner in which she wore her hair, taken off her forehead, and kept back by a comb, rendered her appearance still more youthful. Her hands were thin and delicate, as was especially noticeable when from time to time she drummed them impatiently on the table before her, while the frequent expression of anxiety or irritability discomposed her otherwise handsome face.

At length she seemed as if she could bear her occupation no longer; she threw down the pencil and walked to the window. The whole sky was darkened by an enormous purple cloud, save on the horizon

immediately opposite the window, where one fading streak of yellow light was reflected on the girl's face. Dazzled by this, after the darkness in which she had been sitting, the girl shaded her eyes with her hand, and bending out of the window, looked down the street in the direction of the theatre. Instantly she drew back, and crossing the room resumed her seat at the table. She had hardly done so, taking up her pencil again, and becoming apparently engrossed in her work, when a light step was heard on the stairs, the door opened, and a young man entered the room. The girl looked up from her drawing in the direction of the door. "Is that Mr. Hardinge?" she asked.

"It is," was the reply.

The man who said these words was known to the small world in which he lived (and consequently must henceforth be known in these pages) as Gerald Hardinge, but when the reader saw him two years ago he was called George Heriot.

In those two years a considerable change had taken place in the young man's appearance. He was darker and stouter, his figure was more set, while the growth of a light, curling, brown beard had rendered him much more manly-looking. He was dressed in a light grey suit of clothes, much worn, and carried a soft felt hat in his hand.

"All alone, Rose?" was the first exclamation, in a tone of disappointment.

"Yes, Mr. Gerald," said the girl, quietly. "Madge is not come back from the theatre."

"The piece is over," said Hardinge. "I heard them ringing in the orchestra for the last piece as I came away from the painting-room. What's the last piece to-night?"

"The Warlock of the Glen," said the girl, "and Madge don't play in the Warlock."

"I should think not," said Hardinge, with a sneer.

"But she won't be home yet," continued Rose. "She told me she had something very particular to do, which would detain her perhaps for a couple of hours after she had finished. I was not to sit up for her if I was tired, and I was to tell you or Mr. Potts, if either of you came, that you were not to wait for her, as she would not be home till late."

"All right," said Hardinge, discontentedly enough; "her commands must be obeyed." He was moving towards the door, when, thinking he had been somewhat ungracious, he turned back to the

table, and, pointing to the drawing on which the girl had been engaged, said: "At it still? What an industrious little woman it is. Let me look, Rose?" And he put out his hand, as though to take it.

But Rose threw a sheet of cartridge-paper over the sketch, saying, "Not to-night, Mr. Hardinge; come to-morrow, and you shall see it."

"Right," he said; "I will come to-morrow morning, and we will have another lesson. Good-night, little one. Tell your sister I called." And he nodded and left the room.

When she heard the street-door close behind him the girl stole softly to the window, and watched his retreating figure down the street. When she could no longer distinguish it she turned sadly away.

"Was there ever any one so handsome? was there ever any one so fascinating?" she murmured to herself.

An hour afterwards, and the girl's mind was still filled with visions of Gerald Hardinge, in her dream-haunted sleep, while Gerald Hardinge himself was pacing up and down the street, with rage and jealousy at his heart.

CHAPTER II. BEFORE THE STORM.

THE streets of Wexeter, save during the period set apart for the militia training, or other times of festivity, are left solitary and deserted at a comparatively early period of the evening. The railway omnibuses, bound for the different hotels, roll from the great central station up the High-street at stated intervals up to ten o'clock, and about that hour small parties of pleasure-seekers may be seen here and there wending their way homeward from the theatre, or from the little social gatherings where they have spent an unmistakably quiet evening. But, by that time, such places as in the day are the busiest haunts of traffic—if any region within the limits of the dull and decorous old city can be so spoken of—have relapsed into quiet, while in the precincts of the cathedral, in the still aristocratic region of South-Hedge, and in the straggling suburb of villas which has grown up thereabouts, all symptoms of life have died out at a much earlier hour, and the entire neighbourhood has long since been hushed into repose.

At half-past nine o'clock on the night when Rose Pierrepont, sitting over her drawing, was interrupted by a visit from Gerald Hardinge, a tall woman issued from

the stage-door of the Wexeter Theatre, and was suddenly confronted by Mr. Gonnop, the hall-keeper, who was smoking a long clay pipe, and patrolling the measured space of pavement outside, and to whom she wished "good-night."

"Good-night, Miss Pierrepont," responded the hall-keeper; "it looks amazing thick over there," he added, pointing with his pipe in the direction where a large black cloud was spreading over the city, "and we'll have rain before long, I reckon. Let's hope it'll come down, miss, and get all clear again before next Friday."

"And why particularly next Friday, Gonnop?" asked Miss Pierrepont, in a clear voice.

"Your benefit night, miss!" said the man, looking up at her in wonder; "can't have forgotten that, surely?"

"I had, indeed, for the moment, but now I remember it, and thank you for your good wishes."

"Not that fine weather always does it," said Gonnop, slowly emitting his smoke and looking steadily at her, "being good for tea-gardens, and steam-boat excursions, and ridiculous things of that sort, as is by their very nature contrary to theatres. For, look you when the sun is shining—good-night," said Gonnop, bringing his sentence to a hurried conclusion as the lady moved rapidly away.

When Miss Pierrepont reached the end of the cul-de-sac in which the stage-door was situated, she turned to the right, and looking straight before her, could have seen Miss Cave's house, conspicuous by the brightness of its knocker and the shining cleanliness of its door-step, within fifty yards. Their proximity to the theatre was indeed almost as great a reason for the popularity of Miss Cave's lodgings as their comfort and respectability; but on this occasion Miss Pierrepont had no intention of proceeding direct to her residence, but after looking carefully round to see that she was not followed or watched, she turned off at an acute angle, and quickening her footsteps speedily found herself in the aristocratic quarter of South-Hedge.

The quarter before the hour chimed out from the cathedral clock as she passed into South-Hedge, where the lights were already beginning to appear in the bedroom windows, and where her footfall was the only sound breaking the solemn silence. Past the newly-built almshouses, whose Gothic proportions, which were the delight of the surrounding gentry and the fashionable

local architect, stood dim, and black, and blurred against the background of thick purple cloud behind them; over the railway bridge, in the hollow beneath which the huge engines destined to the service of goods traffic, apparently undecided as to what was best for them to do, were called upon now to progress a little, now in an equal degree to retreat, and were ever and anon shrieking out their doleful lamentations at the indecision of their drivers.

Breasting the hill now, and now on the top of it in something like open country, villas scattered here and there, perched in grounds where the landscape gardener had sought to rival the handiwork of nature, and for the most part had signally failed; a brand-new stucco church, built in imitation of a celebrated prototype in stone, but looking pale and unhealthy, of the complexion of a slack-baked, ill-toasted muffin; then, very much out of place, a squat, dumpy toll-gate, the sole remnant of the pre-suburban locality, of the pre-geeteel day, when, teste the weather-beaten sign-post still extant, Manor Mead was known as Dumpington, and the aims-houses and the villas, and the slack-baked church, had no existence.

The turnpike-gate was closed, and no light was to be seen in the toll-house, as Miss Pierrepont, winding her way at the back of it, turned into a narrow lane which was shaded and screened by the high growing hedges on either side. Here, after a hasty glance round to assure herself that there was no one nigh, she relaxed the swiftness of her pace and threw back her veil, holding up her face to catch whatever air might have found its way into the quiet little retreat. Then she peered long and anxiously into the darkness, and turned her head towards the quarter from whence she had come, as though listening for approaching footsteps. But she heard nothing, save the first dull, long rumble of distant thunder which immediately preceded the striking of the cathedral clock.

"Only just ten," she said to herself. "I am here before my time then as usual, and, as usual, he will be after his. What could have brought him down here, I wonder, now? Not that I need wonder, when I know well enough that the want of money, or the idea that I can be of use to him in some scheme for raising it, are the only things now which induce Philip to break off, for ever so short a time, from the life which exercises such a fascination over him, and to come to me."

She listened again, but after a minute resumed her pacing to and fro.

"I wonder if he ever thinks for a minute how and where it will all end? Whether, in the easy-going current of his life, the idea ever comes across him of the position I occupy, not merely by his tacit consent, but by his express desire? If he ever does think of it, he must be a very different man from the Philip Vane of two years ago, to allow it to continue, or to bear it calmly. Why then the mere notion would—What a fool I am to trouble myself with such memories! Whatever may be the change in him, it cannot be greater than it is with me, and all I have to do is to accept the present state of things, and to make the best of it. This must be he at last!"

She turned swiftly round, as she caught sight of a man's figure coming round by the toll-house. The next minute a tall man joined her, and after a hasty glance around, put his arms round her, and bending down kissed her cheek.

"You need not have looked, Philip, to make sure that we were unobserved," she said, with a short laugh. "There was no one near to see you take the unwarrantable liberty of kissing your wife! You are generally prudent enough to select as our place of meeting some spot where there would be no chance of interruption."

As he heard these words, and marked the tone in which they were spoken, a dark savage look crossed the man's face. It was gone in an instant, and his big black eyes were laughing merrily and his white teeth were gleaming brightly between his smiling lips, as he said:

"Savage to-night, old lady! Upset, eh, Madge? Don't like to be kept cooling her pretty heels in this particularly cut-throat-looking lane waiting for me, is that it?" And once again he placed his arms about her and kissed her cheek.

"No," she said, "that isn't it particularly. I don't know that I am savage, and I do know that I am accustomed to wait my lord's convenience."

"Well, there, don't say any more about it," the man said, in a sharper tone. "I could not get away before, and that's enough. You got my telegram all right?"

"Of course, or I should not be here."

"How confoundedly sharp you are to-night, Madge; down upon every word I say! Nothing gone wrong has there? How's the booking for the benefit?"

"Very good, indeed; the house will be more than full, I think."

"That's right, the money will just come in handy. I made rather a mess of it at Taunton yesterday."

"Have there been races at Taunton?"

"Yes, of course; that's why I came on to see you. Shouldn't have been in the neighbourhood for some time to come, and, therefore, thought I had better take advantage of the chance."

"Then it was really to see me that you came this time, Philip?" said the girl, nestling towards him, and looking up into his face.

"Of course it was, my dear!" he replied. "What did you think it was—not business? There is no information to be got, no money to be made out of you."

"Isn't there?" she said, quietly; "I thought there was."

"You know what I mean," he said.

"By the way, don't forget to send me that benefit money as soon as you get hold of it. You could send it to the club, you know. What do you think the figure is likely to be?"

"The figure?"

"Yes, the amount, the sum total. Heavens on earth, Madge, how slow you are!"

"Yes," said the girl, quietly, "I am thoroughly provincial; you see I have not had the chance recently of having my wits sharpened, by contact with the clever people in London! You want to know the sum to be realised by the benefit? I should say forty-two or forty-three pounds."

Philip Vane gave a low whistle.

"That's a very mild amount," he said.

"I was looking for something much higher than that! By George, Madge, this will never do! Three pounds a week, and a benefit producing under fifty pounds; those are starvation prices! I must take you up to London. I suppose you would do there, though it's a confounded pity you can't sing and dance!"

"Yes," said the girl, bitterly, "those are qualifications, the absence of which, in his wife, every man ought to regret."

He looked up at her under his eyebrows, but it was too dark for him to catch the expression of her face. There was, however, no mistaking the sneer conveyed in the tone of her voice. It was the second time during their short interview that she had thus offended him.

"What ails you to-night?" he said.

"What do you mean by sneering and gibing at me in this manner?"

"What do I mean!" she cried. "I will tell you plainly what I mean—I mean that

I am sick of the manner in which you treat me! You think that I am dull and stupid, but I am neither so stupid nor so dull that I cannot see plainly enough the value you put upon me, without the necessity for your insulting me by explaining it in words. I am your wife, which means your drudge, your bread-winner. Be it so; I don't repine, I did not expect to be made a fine lady of, or to live in idleness after you married me; but I did expect that you would be content with me and my talents, such as they were, and would not complain while I worked my hardest, even if my earnings might be small."

She paused and stood confronting him, her head erect, her hands nervously clasped together beneath her cloak.

"Have you anything more to say?" he asked in a low voice.

"Yes," she continued. "I want to know when there is to be an end to this deception? When you intend to acknowledge me openly as your wife, and take me out of my present position, which is inexpressibly painful to me, and, mark my words, infinitely perilous to you? I do not want rest, or ease, or luxury. I did not expect what most women are led to expect, that they are to look to their husbands for support; God knows, I am willing to work; and not merely willing, but delighted. I do not know that I should be happy without my work, but I want you to give me my position as your wife, and to be content with what I earn in that position."

As she ceased speaking, the low rumble of the thunder, this time much nearer, was again audible. There was a pause for a moment as its last faint mutterings died away, then Philip Vane said:

"You're right, Madge, in what you say, and I was a brute to grumble, knowing how hard and how cheerfully you work. And you are right, too, about your position. It is hard lines for you to have to come out here to meet me on such a night as this is going to be; to have to tramp all along the road after playing——"

"It is not that, Philip," interrupted the girl. "I don't mind that. I don't mind the hardship; all I hate is the deceit, the having to hide the fact of our marriage even from Rose, the having to nod and smile at the kindly prophecies of the old landlady at the lodgings as to my future, the having to receive attentions from honourable men, which would be naturally gratifying to an unmarried girl, which are degrading to me as your wife."

"Yes," said Philip Vane, "I understand all that, of course, and as soon as I can I will put it right. I cannot do it just now, but I hope in a few months to make that all square. By the way, Madge, talking about attentions, what about the scene-painter—is he still here?"

"Yes, he is still with the company."

"And still as spoony as ever?"

"I don't know about being 'spoony;' I think he is very fond of me, but he's a mere boy, you know, and——"

"Yes, I know! And have you still got that notion that you told me about his being a swell?"

"I have no doubt that he is a gentleman by position and education; beyond that I know nothing."

"Exactly; that's quite enough! I shouldn't discourage his spooniness if I were you, Madge; something may turn up out of it. Don't you fear my being jealous. I can trust you, old woman; and if this man ever came into any money, or was received back by his friends, from whom you seem to suppose he has run away, we may make something out of him. I've written you some letters, I suppose?"

Madge hesitated for a moment. "Yes, some," she said.

"Ah! I don't want to see them, bless you," cried Philip Vane; "I can trust you perfectly, only I think you had better keep them, not tear them up or destroy them in any way; they may be useful one of these days. By Jove! here it comes," he cried, as, after a few thick drops, a heavy peal of thunder broke right above their heads. "We had better make a bolt of it at once. I've got a cab waiting the other side of the turnpike, and can set you down where you like. Don't be afraid, Madge; the driver doesn't know me, and I'll take care he doesn't recognise you."

The storm was sharp while it lasted, but was soon over. Miss Cave, who had sat up for her lodger and "gone round the house," as was her wont no matter how late the hour, after every one else had retired to rest, knocked at Miss Pierrepont's door to inform her that the clouds had quite cleared away, and that the moon was shining brightly.

"A good omen for Friday, my dear," added the old lady, as she retired to bed.

"I hope so," said Madge to herself, "I hope so, for then Philip will get this money that he says he wants. Oh, my God!" cried the girl, as she seated herself on the edge of the bed, "how rapidly the

romance is dying out of my life! Never has he spoken so plainly as to-night, never striven so little to disguise himself! The money, and the money, and the money! To take what I can earn down here, to wish that I could earn more in London, to bid me gull the boy and lead him on, and take care that I keep his letters, of which something might be made! All this Philip did not scruple to do, and then he pats my cheek and tells me 'he trusts me!'"

About the same time Philip Vane, the sole occupant of the smoking-room at the Half Moon, was moodily puffing out the last fragment of his cigar. "Forty pounds," he muttered to himself, "and I looked for at least seventy. Rode as rusty as a nail when I said I wished she could sing, and was cantankerous about everything! Worrying about her 'position,' too. I thought I had settled that question, but to-night she chose to revive it. I shall have to put my foot down upon one or two of these things, and upon Miss Madge herself if she doesn't mind."

So saying Philip Vane threw the butt of his cigar into the empty fireplace and strode off to bed.

INELEGANT EXTRACTS.

SOME amusing, and I think not altogether uninteresting chapters might be added to the *Curiosities of Literature*, in the direction indicated by the words at the head of this paper; by collecting specimens, that is to say, of the sort of literary production which may be looked for when the half-educated mechanic, or the almost uneducated ploughman, applies

His hard unpliant finger at the pen;

or when the servant girl (becoming for the nonce one of "all ye ladies now at land") gives us ocular demonstration "how hard it is to write." During the many years I was corresponding clerk in the great Anglo-Scandinavian shipping firm of N. Listem, M. Barkham and Schippemhoff, of Louderpool (who were agents for the forwarding of passengers to every part of the inhabited globe), there passed through my hands some wonderful specimens—wonderful in a variety of ways—of popular composition. Having retained a large selection of these, and having found them the cause of much amusement in their manuscript dress, I see no reason why a few of them should not be promoted to the dignity of

print, for the benefit of the readers of this journal.

Let us take our "modern instances," almost at random, from a collection of isolated words, which bear testimony to the severe mental struggles of the writers to reproduce on paper the ideas they have had in their hearts to express. Here is "achertion" for "assertion;" "inyough" for "enough;" "Auck-phault" for "Oxford;" "youtohels" for "utensils;" "asseterenty" for "assistant secretary;" "shatersphaction," "ekskitement;" "foyegh" for "voyage;" "shut abel parson" for "suitable person;" "post boned" for "postponed;" "noshing" for "notion;" "vcakens" for "vacancy;" "aniticious," "anksguhs," and "angchguhs" for "anxious;" "cignuteire" for "signature;" "sockamstances;" "athara" for "other" (this is by a Welshman); "sudesfide" for "satisfied;" "ciness" for "kindness;" "op jection" for "objection;" "affetchuable" for "affectionately;" "necrey" for "necessary;" "meakines" for "mechanics," and so on ad libitum.

Here are some additional phonetic oddities: "I request a fever of you;" "all our araingments are mad;" "i am un paisont (impatient) to know did he landed safe." This is a very fine specimen: "Anxiously" (doubtless after intense cogitation) comes out "ain'cheasuley." "If you require marrid cuples i can oblige you by Marring a Domestick servant." "I am poor arfin boy, aged 29, with a willing heart, a strong arem, and a loose leg." "I and my wife hear vcearey Dercierish to emergrunt. I can give you everey sattersphactshun." "I desire a kind recast (request) of you," &c. &c.

Here are a few odd phrases. A cockney says, "I have a good charchester, if suck a thing is wanted." "I enclose a stamped envollop." "My husband, although I says it as shouldn't, was as fine a man as you would meet with in a day's march: why, sir, he took a coffin six foot long." Another woman, recounting the advice she had received to go abroad, says she was told "you're just the kind of woman; you are so wiry." An Irish teacher, writing on behalf of some proposed emigrants, says that "they are sober, industrious, moral, honest, well conducted, and rather exemplary in every laudable way." "My name is Lorier Jones, and I lives at Nothing Hill;" and Laura Jones wants, "if ele-gable, to go to colonans at the arlest oper-ainty." "To young men from one to to

and 20" (that is, from 21 to 22 years of age) wish to become "himagramphs." This reminds me of a letter from "the undersinged Police hossifer," as he described himself, who asks if "heny more male hemmegrunters" are required, because he would "like to go hout, as the force is going to Brake hup."

Let us take some extracts a little more connected. An Irish girl writes, "That reluctantly to state, petitioner's mother died lately of a sickness which prohibited her from emigrating. Alas! in accordance with the Adage 'Seldom one misfortune comes alone,' the death prohibits poor petitioner from going; but if your honour, from feelings of charity, humanity, gratitude, and clemency," &c. The following comes to hand the very day I am writing: "I hav thaken the liberty to hask of you now Mr. (So-and-so). Ef you kinley enform me as sown as posable you will werre much ablige me. Should you not know that purson prups you will infurm me wear I cold apley. With manney theanks" (from Bristol). The next specimen makes use of words after a very miscellaneous fashion, reminding one of the Scotchman who, after a course of reading in Doctor Johnson's Dictionary, said that he found it full of interesting matter, but that it was "rather unconnectit." My present correspondent says: "I beg attention concerning the circumstance of pity that acquainted me on receiving your letter of presentation. I was in the act of removing when my misfortune demanded an obstruction owing to the above mentioned," &c. A poor boy says: "I am parent Less & house Less & a compleat starveing youth." The following is rather involved in style: "In consequence of meeting with a mistake that I have to deplore the unexpected recovery (I think he means the expected non-recovery) of my dear mother whose illness is so bad I do not know the minute she may depart," &c.

Perhaps the following extracts will be more readable if we give them in separate paragraphs:

"Dear Sir,—“I have been ansusley A. whiten (awaiting) for A hansure has I ham hout of work. I hope you will not be Angre whith me for I am so misurhupbel. I hope I shant be long before I goise.

“Your A fetchnet friend.”

“I beg to inform you that I am not in a fit state to preseide (proceed) on the

voyage : me two children are infested with the checoff" (query, "chin cough?")
 "Pat C—— is dangerously ill, and in a bad state of health."

"A Por norphon" says he can "pedus a nockalodgement" of having paid so and so.

"Dear Sir,—“i take Lipete of Riter thes fur of Line to informed you that i a suth (query ‘I should’) Like to go to Colam-bine—i am a hagutel (agricultural) work man as tha is too hovis (of us?) that wood like to go. Won hage 23 and the hod (other?) 26.”

"Sir i see

"by lloyd's newspaper that you are aisiaten (assisting) a few larban man & theare waifes (wives) abroad."

"Being seduced by persons of repute I wish to obtain a passage. I know all serts of labor, very understanding in a gentleman's employment, & my wife equally so & knowledgeable in every sort of house business."

"To the Mangen (manager), &c.

"Have you eyeney ships fo Victori. I am very health. I blon (belong) to Wins-er. I lived at Honsey lane Higit ill—Plese a dres to Baker wored (ward?) — Huspitell."

"September 191870.

"Dear friend, we are tow young man want tow Emigration tow Australia for tow shapards age of the tow one 21 of age the other four and 24 of age." (This is from a Welshman).

"Myself & chister in or about 18 years old—we are domestive servants—Testa-manial charresters." (From County Clare).

"Deated this 3 Oct 53.

"I feel much happy in being capable of addressing your most kind letter here represent before the Public in migrating Europeans to Austrila" (from a Dundee man).

"I wis to inform you that i wis to goo with won of your Amagracton Ships i se in your Advrtisments you wis to know the oxapaction we fowly * * ples to rit me," &c.

"Plais te send Plais te sende Mee sadele as I intend to Jaine in hir Magesty serves as an Emagrants Te Astrile * * Your evir umbill servant" (not "umpel serpent," as another man subscribed himself).

"I wish to cross the Equinoxial line and make my habitations in Ocetrilla."

The gentleman who achieved "sockamstances" and "caracketer," says, "you mite if you ples gave me the fal fol partikleys." What he means by "fal fol" I am quite unable to make out.

I hardly think it is necessary to assure the reader of the authenticity of these extracts. They appear to me to carry proof of their genuineness on the face of them, and to contrast very strikingly with the specimens of misspelling which we frequently meet with in books. Here are a couple of such concocted instances I have met with to-day :

"Deer Jeames,—Hive bin werry unfort-night with They pigs won have bin corn-find with the cat-tell plage and tother with a familee of 3 lade up, with mizzells hopping this Wil find you, Wel as it leves me, At presen, sow No moor from me at present. Yore troolie R. H."

The other case is in a recently published book, where an acquitted thief is represented as telling his "pals" that Mr. So-and-so, his adyocate, "was the werriest cleverest lawrcer hin the ole hof Heng-land," and advising them "never to hem-ploy hany hother hif they vished to get hoff."

I confess these do not seem to me to have the true ring about them; indeed, I doubt if many fiction writers have succeeded in manufacturing bad English, as well as it is constantly being done by those who are "native and to the manner born."

Compare these two last samples with the following :

"pleas, G. H, Labor in Sheffield, York-shir, in 43 years of ag wicks to emmygrate info Cap or Canade. I have got my register from the Parsh wear I was born—pleas send the full pettluas &c. pleas dredced" (direct), &c.

Or this :

"my respective sir, I am excusing my trouble To you And to all gentlet That Joines your Sosity That a little accident happene Meigot hurted in the Irenwork," &c.

Or this :

"Hearing that there is acuractal La-bourels Wanted for Sadme (Sydney) i want to go there," &c.

Or again this :

"I am a person of hie respect in charac-ter & can undergo any thing you propesd.

I am 205 years of adge and be hily recommended," &c.

This form of mistake in stating ages is not uncommon, nor indeed very much to be wondered at. One instance, by way of sample, may be worth reproducing. A man states his family thus :

"Sons 118 122 115, daughters 117 119," meaning one eighteen, one twenty-two, and so on.

The following are amusing, not so much from anything grotesque in the spelling or the diction, but as descriptive of the writer's pursuits.

"I am at present compelled to tramp from town to town in surch of employment, or I may say work, with my wife, and I am that poor that I am often compelled to seek shelter in a barn or cart lodge, and sometimes I am lucky enough to scrape sixpence together by singin a song or selling a ballad, for wick I obtain a lodgins at a common lodgin house, wheair tramps and travelers of the lowest order resort to. * * You may prehaps like to know what trade I am—I am a Jack of all trades. I can guild a picture frame & I can mend a boot or shoe—I can paint a cart or glaize a shach (sash). I can stand two houres trick at the elm (helm) or reef a topsail—I can cook a dinner or wait at table—I can wash a gig & groom a horse, and I can do a bit of gardonging" (garden- ing).

Surely a handy man like this should be able to get some sort of employment to enable him to live. Another man thus describes his qualifications :

"I write you this in the name of the Lord * * I ham a minar, but If there's anything else to do in farming iean do it, or iean fix any work In the mining scale for pumping watter or hall up staf from a shaft * * thank God I can make almost anything beloning tooany mind (mine) in the contry—and where I go I will do my masters good as well as myself by God's help. Sir, I ham no Intoxingeating drinker. I and all my father's family are teatolars and my Intended wife is a teatolar too * * Sir, as long as our Queen take the law of this contry from the bibel I shall go by it, and no fals names or reports shall come out of my mouth if I now it. Sir, I must conclude hoping to join your servis by the help of the Lord. Good by Sir. I ham of to work—If possibal I can go I will do you good by the Lord's help—Good by,

Sir. I ham of. Good by. God bless you and all that is around you and me. Good by. I ham of."

The writer gets somewhat tautological towards the end, and is altogether, I think, just a trifle conceited, pragmatistical, and profane. Our next extract is from a man of a similar, but somewhat superior class :

"I purpose in June to cast my bread upon the Australian waters. My avocations for some years have been divided between those of Assistant Schoolmaster and Commercial Clerk—salary averaging from £20 to £50—never more—yet still obliged to keep up an appearance in broadcloth and boots, vegetating from year to year in expectation of some improvement. I have been used to depend on my own resources, as a sort of 'Caleb Quoten,' and am not ashamed to dirty my hands. I have a knowledge of gardening, kitchen and parterre—a smattering of the healing art—can sew and mend my own clothes, &c., if required—cook and make puddings in a plain way—can use my tools as a carpenter, smith, painter, whitewasher, &c. My habits are simple. I never exceed 2 glasses of beer per day, & have a dislike of spirits, which I do not taste twice in a year, & smoke very little. I cannot ride, but am reckoned a decent shot, if the dingoes (?) can appreciate such a qualification."

And here is what an Irish lad says of himself: "i must travel and see life—i am clever at many things—i am handy at cart-penting—also able to play many instruments of music, moreover the scotch and irish pipes—am counted the best at them." This young fellow is in love. He says: "i once loved a girl—i never loved one but her;" and, alas! she has already emigrated.

This follows suit very well :

"i tak the opertunity to ast you to pleast to grant mee the faver taking a laful bride with mee, for shee dos fill in clind to go with mee, and when i first send up to you i did not now has shee was alive, for i havent had any conaction with her this two years until last Thursday, & i and shee wish to go together—if you hould oblige mde to have 3 weeks for the purpose of maring i should be very much thankful for it, & i shall be published tomorrow the first time * * & if required i will send the stifict of marage & carite—i whould ratha you did diseve mee of a voyage then of my true bride for i never should not be conted

(contented) whith thout shee & i hope & trust you will grant us both the faver so no more at present from

The Gay Plough man."

Reverting to letters descriptive of the writer's pursuits, I come upon this: "Me being a Laderbing man, that is to say such as a carman, bricklears Lobour, labair in a blocksmith shop or a Labouring Gardner and wishing to go to Austsalia." It is remarkable how this person "labours" to get the right spelling of that word, and at last actually reaches it, though I think only by accident.

Again, under this head, an Oxfordshire man says: "I have a famaley of 8 children—3 ofe them young wiming servants—1 of my sones a very active youth—the other 4 very active children—the youngest 5 years old—I myself hame now a Backer—I was Bread to agricultural laber—for nearly 20 years I have Bean a shone maker—for several years I have Beane a Wheelwright, a Bricklayer, and I could be a Carpenter if required, and my delight would be in Orlteavaten land, &C." We have been obliged, in transcribing this gentleman's effusion, and in some others, to insinuate a comma or a dash to make them legible to the "hignorant hupper classes," to quote the words of an orator of Clerkenwell Green, otherwise the quotations are exact.

To make a great stride from the wants of the really destitute class, we come to a list of superfluities which some apparently well-to-do people wish their protégé to be allowed to take with him. These are some of the things they want to provide him with, over and above the full supply of necessities which the law compels every emigrant ship to carry; he wants, as "he is a very big healthy lad for his age," to take—

"1. A few tin loaves—two of them in slices toasted, and strained, and dried.

"2. A little soft sugar, about 4 lb.

"3. Mixed tea, about 1 lb.

"4. Hard parkin, 6 lb. (Whatever is 'Parkin?')

"5. Sound green apples, 6 lb."

Then follow, two boxes of sardines, twelve pots of preserves, two bottles of pickles, thirty pounds of flour, one bottle of lemon kali, one bottle of hair-oil, some figs, and baking powder, and "a score of sound potatoes"—"a list of things of which he" (the said "very big healthy lad") "is very fond." His animal wants being thus attended to, his intellectual or aesthetic proclivities are not forgotten, for "he has also

a Base Fiddle which he desires to take with him."

Let us conclude with a few additional specimens of grotesque phoneticisms and quaint forms of expression. One man says, "I was sent out to Jameca where I took Ariciples" (crysipelas). Another, that he has been employed in the "Geoligao" Department in one of the colonies. A third, "I hav a witch to emigrate." Another has a turn for "mechanicism and works of artfulness." A woman says that "she is a thorough servant & a needles woman." The father of a family says, "Let me know how to Perced and what it coât for Etch a Dult and for childring as I have Got Six of famly. I Wood Lick to tuck them if that I could Dow so. Ples to letter us kow the Port your emegrating tou; if tou Port Natle I Wood Lick to go thar." Thus proving himself to be as fine a specimen, for our present purpose, as the man who assured us that he was "a beautiful scrivenger & well skilled in Leterature."

NATURE'S COMFORTING.

No, not to the April lilies,
Though fair be their moonlight sheen,
No, not to the July roses,
Though each be a radiant queen.
Not to the sweet spring loveliness,
Not to the summer glow,
Not to autumn's gorgeous parting smile,
Nor to winter's royal snow.
The world is rich in its varying dress,
Its seasons are full and fair,
It can brighten, gladden, or dream for us,
But oh, mourner, go not there!

The young leaves flaunt their fresh green life,
Though they wave o'er the coffin-pall,
The young flowers blossom in beauty bright,
Though our heart-buds fade and fall.
The birds' gay carol jars the ear,
That thrills to the death-bell's note,
Drearily into the darkened room,
Sweet scents of the jasmine float.
If our hopes are blighted, our prizes naught,
Are the fruits less rich and rare?
Wears the laughing sky one cloud for us?
Nay, mourner, look not there!

Who would have nature's comforting,
I rede them seek the shore
Wherever and aye through sun and shade,
The great waves rise and roar.
The mighty thunderous music
Will lull the fevered brain,
The low melodious monotone,
Breathe patience unto pain.
The whisper of the ebbing tide
Answer the passionate prayer,
With "wait, hush! wait for a little while,"
Oh, mourner, linger there!

The glorious, vast, unchanging sweep,
The long unceasing boom,
Carry the saddened spirit on
To the world beyond the tomb.
Nothing of fading and coming back,
In the great eternal waves,

Nothing of horrible contrast mocks,
Like flowers on tended graves.
Deep as love is, and solemn as faith,
Tender and strong as prayer,
The sea has solace for every mood,
Oh, mourner, seek it there!

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

SOUTHAMPTON BUILDINGS (HOLBORN END).

A LITTLE above where Holborn Bars once stretched, and a little south-westward of Middle Row, that vexatious Thermopylæ now removed, that for centuries the resistors of London improvement defended tooth and nail against all comers, a narrow street winds by several eccentric and devious turns till it weds itself with Chancery-lane. Like the life of some great men, the obscure street begins in an unnoticed, humble kind of way, and it is not till half-way through that it breaks into bloom and genial blossom. Just where hurrying lawyers' clerks turn sharp off westward into Chancery-lane, the intelligent London explorer, looking eastward, sees a frontage and terrace of Jacobean architecture. Below that spreads a quiet, tidy little garden with well-ordered, close-shaven turf, on which the grave clock of Staples Inn Hall looks down with a calm and contemplative face, that seems almost to smile (as a lord chancellor's grim visage sometimes softens at a legal joke) whenever a slant ray of errant sunshine brightens its gilt figures. That slip of turf, and those casual shy-looking flowers, are descended from a good old stock. The plants spring from flowers which Shakespeare himself may have picked and chatted over. Yes, those "daffodils that come before the swallows dare, and tempt the winds of March with beauty," violets blue as the lid of Cytherea's eyes, and sweeter than her breath, are children of those he once looked upon. For here, in the great Elizabethan times of poetry and heroism, stood the gardens of Shakespeare's great friend and first patron, Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton.

The proud order of the Templars had on this site, in 1128, their first Preceptory (Henry the First), not moving to the banks of the Thames till 1184 (Henry the Second). Here on the shore of Holborn (if we may be allowed to use an original metaphor) these stalwart smiters of the turbaned infidel first settled. The Templars and their rivals, the Hospitallers (who had originally at their starting fed and supported them),

and who originally settled at Clerkenwell, both came to England in the same reign. The first Templars were Frenchmen, the first Hospitallers Italians. The latter began by tending sick pilgrims, the former by escorting pilgrims to the Holy City. It is difficult to say which order became first corrupt, or which finally became the most detestable. In the desert and on the battlements of Acre, Jerusalem, and Damietta, the Templars fought like Turks, and their shirts of twisted mail covered lion hearts; but in Fleet-street, and in the English towns, they fell rapidly into degradation. When they had had enough of fighting they tried less dangerous, but more satisfying pleasures, and like Samson, their strength, which was their glory, then passed from them.

After the failure of the second crusade, when Europe was busy reviling good St. Bernard, who had encouraged it, Henry the Second, hoping to wash his hands of Becket's blood, paid the expenses of two hundred Knights Templars for a year in Palestine. In this reign the Grand Master of the Temple came over to England with Heraclius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the Grand Master of the Hospitallers, to urge forward the English crusaders, whom Prince John (afterwards the usurper) wished to command; and, while in London, Heraclius dedicated the church of St. John, Clerkenwell, and the church of the Temple in Fleet-street. This was in 1184 or 1185. In the flames of their funeral pyres the Templars at last cruelly expiated their sins. The monks declared that they had become idolaters, and practised unlawful rites. One thing is certain, and that fact may, perhaps, better explain the haste with which those false priests built up for the knights the Paris fagots, and that is, that the Order had grown too rich. It was plethoric, and needed to be bled. But enough of the Templars. Suffice it to say that Stow, in Elizabeth's time, mentions that Master Ropar, building much at Southampton House, came upon the ruins of the round buildings of the old Templars' house, which had been built of Caen stone. Mr. Peter Cunningham says, in his book on London (1849), that in May, 1847, Mr. Griffith, a whip-maker, 322, Holborn, told him "that when digging the foundations of a workshop, he had seen portions of a circular building resembling the ruins of the Temple described by Stow."

The Wriothesleys seem to have been preceded by the earls and bishops of Lin-

coln, from whom the present Inn and Fields derived their name. The house came to the Wriothesleys in the time of Edward the Sixth. The first known Wriothesley, according to Burke, was a plain John Wriothesley, who was Falcon Herald in the reign of Edward the Fourth, and Garter King-at-Arms to Richard the Third. This herald's grandson was the first titled dweller in the turning out of Holborn. Whether he could break a lance fairly, woo a pretty lass featly, or refute a shaven priest roundly, we know not; but this is certain, Henry the Eighth sent him to Denmark to bid for the Princess Christiana, who, however (luckily for her), never came to hand; he was also constable of the castle of Southampton, and having been sent to negotiate with that astute emperor, Charles the Fifth, was made Baron Wriothesley of Tichfield, in Hampshire, a monastery recently gutted by Henry. Soon after this, floating with the tide, the new peer became Lord Chancellor of England, a Knight of the Garter, and subsequently one of the jealous, wife-slaying tyrant's executors. Three days before the coronation of that "royal imp of fame"—Edward the Sixth—Wriothesley was created Earl of Southampton. But here the tide turned; he crossed the plots of the Protector Somerset, who, watching an opportunity, denounced him to the council for having, without permission, and to gain more time for further business, put the Great Seal into commission. For this he forfeited his grand office, and was fined and imprisoned in his own Holborn house. In spite of this venial fault, and the hostility of Somerset, which to a virtuous man was the highest honour, the earl seems to have been a wise and learned chancellor, and a good man. He died eight years before the ascension of Elizabeth. Two of his favourite aphorisms have been preserved. One was, that "Force awes, but justice governs the world;" the other, "I love a bishop to satisfy my conscience; a lawyer to guide my judgment; a good family to keep up my interest; and an university to preserve my name." The next earl was a friend of the Duke of Norfolk, dabbled in the Roman Catholic plots for the unwise duke's marriage with Mary Queen of Scots, and seems himself to have been more than half a papist. His only daughter married Lord Arundel, of Wardour, in Wiltshire, a Catholic nobleman. But it is to the son of this man of wrong proclivities that our sympathy chiefly attaches, and his name

invests the street for ever with a special dignity and interest.

Henry Wriothesley, the third earl, was that generous and impulsive young nobleman to whom Shakespeare dedicated his first poems, *Venus and Adonis*, and *Lucrece*. Big-wigged history chiefly values the earl for being the brother officer and fellow conspirator of the unfortunate and hot-headed Essex, whom he followed in that insane dash through Temple Bar, that led the hero of Cadiz by quick stages to the scaffold on Tower Hill. In those shaking morasses of doubt, the biographies of Shakespeare, a few pieces of dry ground are traceable. The first and firmest of these sure spots is the fact that in 1593, seven years or so after Shakespeare arrived in London to seek his fortune, he dedicated his *Venus and Adonis*, avowed by him "the first heir of my invention," to the Right Honourable Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, and Baron of Tichfield; and the next year his *Lucrece*, published at the White Greyhound, in St. Paul's Churchyard. As we know at least this for certain that in 1598, twelve years after he left Stratford, Shakespeare had already written his *Love's Labour Lost*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Richard the Second*, *Richard the Third*, *Henry the Fourth*, *King John*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, it is almost certain that even in 1593 he had produced one or two plays. Perhaps to Lord Brooke, a nobleman of his own county, the new poet may have been indebted for an introduction to that generous and amiable earl who lived in Holborn, so near Lord Brooke. The dedications of the two poems are interesting, because they hand down to us Shakespeare's own words, in simple and sincere prose, and mark the kind of relationship existing between a young Warwickshire poet (then twenty-nine) and a young nobleman who encouraged poets and actors of genius. We have no letters of our great poet, no diary, no personal records left, nothing but these two short dedications. That to *Venus and Adonis* is addressed

To the Right Honourable Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton and Baron of Tichfield.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,—I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden; only if your honour seem but pleased I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours till I have

honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after ear (till) so barren a land for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour to your heart's content, which I wish may always answer your own wish and the world's hopeful expectation.

Your honour's in all duty,
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Several things strike us in this dedication. It contains too many "honours," it is pitched in just a little too low a key, and the final quibble of the words "wish" and "wish," reminds us of the somewhat tedious equivokes in *Love's Labour Lost*, and other early plays. The phrase "idle hours" seems to us also worthy of note, as indicating that verse writing and play patching were not yet the staple occupations of Shakespeare's London life. In the last line the poet alludes of course to the youth of his patron. The poem came to a second edition in 1594, and in May of the same year appeared *Lucrece*, with the following dedication to the young earl. It is in a warmer and more avowedly ambitious vein than its predecessor, but also wants simplicity:

THE love I dedicate to your lordship is without end; whereof this pamphlet without beginning is but a superfluous moiety (this almost snacks of a lawyer's office). The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater my duty would show greater; meantime, as it is it is bound to your lordship, to whom I wish long life still lengthened with all happiness.

Your lordship's in all duty,
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Rowe quotes a story of Sir William Davenant, who liked to be considered an illegitimate son of the poet, that the earl once showed his regards and admiration for Shakespeare by giving him a thousand pounds, "to enable him to go through with a purchase he heard he had a mind to." If this tradition be true, Shakespeare must indeed some bright day or other have felt his heart leap up as he turned into Chancery-lane, and walked fast towards the Blackfriars Theatre (close to where Printing House-square now is), or taken boat at the Temple Stairs for the Globe (his summer

theatre), built the very year *Lucrece* was published. This munificent gift, Mr. Collier thinks, was made soon after *Lucrece* appeared; it might have been to purchase a share in the Globe, but we would rather refer it to the purchase of New Place at Stratford in 1597 (an extraordinary proof of wealth in a young adventurer who had been only eleven years in London). The generous sympathy with a gallant soldier like Essex, driven, as he declared, by Raleigh and Cecil from the queen's presence, led the Holborn earl into treasonable meetings with discontented Puritans and factious officers, that led at last to that insane rush to Paul's Cross to rouse the City, February the 8th, 1601. At the trial Essex accused Cecil of upholding the Infanta of Spain as the successor, and appealed to Southampton as having heard the same report. Cecil at once rose, and conjured Southampton by their former friendship, and as a Christian man, to name the informer. Southampton then named Sir Robert Knollys, uncle to Essex, and controller of the household, but it appeared he had misunderstood him. The earl had refused to give the name till the court had pronounced such a revelation consistent with his honour. Southampton eventually escaped, though his friend Davers was beheaded. It seemed certain to all that he had imperilled his life from friendship, not from a love of treason, and though condemned and attainted, he remained unharmed in the Tower till the queen died. When King James the First came, the warm-hearted but imprudent earl was restored to his rights, and made captain of the Isle of Wight and castle of Carisbrooke. This friend and early patron of Shakespeare died 1624, the year before the accession of Charles the First.

In old Southampton House Shakespeare must have spent many a pleasant hour, and the earl's three daughters may have been the prototypes of his teasing Beatrice, his pretty Anne Page, and his tender Imogene. Thero Moth may have taken his sword and cap, Malvolio have shown him his chain of office, Lancelot have given him the pert answer. In the court-yard there, dogged Sampson and sturdy Balthazar may have frowned at rival serving-men, and Juliet's nurse have bustled by, hot and fuming at some incivility shown her by my Lord Brooke's mistress of the Starchery. For these reasons, therefore, if for no other, we hold, and shall ever continue to hold, the buildings of Southampton in high regard.

Thomas, the fourth earl, a grave and wise man, became a great personage at the courts of Charles the First and Charles the Second. Lord Clarendon, who had a fine Roman hand, when he wrote the character of an honest and loyal man, has done justice to Southampton in his great work on the civil war. He describes the earl as a younger brother, studious, and as a boy disliking ceremony, and being called my lord. Having been hardly treated by the court, the Puritans courted him at the outbreak of the war, and he joined them against the Earl of Strafford, till it came to his trial, which he vigorously opposed. "He was a man," says Clarendon, his firm friend, "of a great sharpness of judgment, and very quick apprehension, and that readiness of expression upon any sudden debate, that no man delivered himself more advantageously and weightily, and more efficaciously with his hearers, and that no man gave them more trouble in his opposition, or drew so many to a concurrence with him in opinion. He had no relation to or dependence upon the court, or purpose to have any, but wholly pursued the public interest." The earl did not become a privy councillor, or of the king's bed-chamber, till the parliament had declared no man capable of office who had not signed their protestation. He went with the king to York, was with him in the rush at Edge Hill, and stayed at Oxford with him till the end of the war, always fulfilling his duty, always dreading the issue, always eager to advance peace. "The earl," says Clarendon, warmly, "was indeed a great man in all respects, and brought very much reputation to the king's cause." So much we should have hoped and expected of the son of Shakespeare's noble friend, who must often have sat on the poet's lap, and heard him utter wisdom and wit. He was one of those true men the king wished to be round him at the Isle of Wight, and, faithful to the last, he was present when they bore Charles's coffin, white with snow, to the vault at Windsor. After the Restoration, the magnate of Holborn was installed a Knight of the Garter, and was made Lord Treasurer of England. He strove, side by side with his old friend Hyde, to restore the shattered finances of Charles, and to store money for the future: but spaniels, pimps, cardinals' nieces, and mistresses of all ages and ranks, soon snatched away the savings of the thrifty minister, and the good-natured, shameless king only laughed at the greediness of

these rapacious creatures, and the old nobleman's anger and dismay. The earl died at Southampton House, "near Holburne, in the suburb of London," May, 1667, seven years after "the glorious Restoration," when all his honours, including the earldom of Chichester, became extinct. The earl's house was taken down about 1652. Howell, in 1657, describes Southampton House as lately taken down and turned to "several private tenements." Probably the loyal earl,

True as the dial to the sun,
Although it be not shone upon,

had, during his weary exile, been obliged to part with some of the property. Rachel, the daughter of the last earl by a French lady, the first of his three wives, married that estimable nobleman, Lord William Russell. She is that grand and noble woman whose memory shines like a star above the sin and corruption of an evil age. No wonder that Lord William Russell, on his way to the scaffold, gave a mournful look at the turning to Southampton-buildings. He remembered that he had wooed there her of whom he spoke when he was called for trial for high treason at the Old Bailey, and the Lord Chief Justice offered him any of his servants to assist him in taking down the evidence:

"My wife is here, my lord, to do it."

In 1664, Pepys describes walking to "my Lord Sandwich's through my Lord of Southampton's new buildings in the fields behind Gray's-inn;" but still, as we have seen, the earl died in Holborn.

Southampton-buildings seems to have been the first street frequented by coffee-drinkers; for Antony Wood, the Oxford biographer, says that in 1650 (two years before the Restoration), Jacob, a Jew (probably from the Levant), opened a coffee-house in St. Peter's parish, Oxford, and when he left the learned city he sold coffee in old Southampton-buildings in Holborn, near London. He was living there in 1671. Here, too, in the quiet turning out of Holborn, Ludlow, the regicide, hid away till he could escape to Switzerland.

MATTHIAS THE GHOST QUELLER.

"Did you ever hear of such a thing as the ghost of a living person?" inquired Maximilian.

"Well," replied Laurence, "I have often heard of the Scotch wraith, which appears at the moment of a person's decease, and thus indicates the death of that person, perhaps to a distant friend."

"No, that is not what I mean," explained Maximilian. "Stories of the wraith are common all over the world, but I imagine that in the case of this particular species of phantom, the death of the person is supposed to precede, if only by a second, the appearance of the spectre."

"Well," remarked Laurence, "there is the death-fetch, which Baynim once made so famous. This is represented to be the spectre of a living person, of whose approaching death its appearance is an infallible sign."

"Something like a banshee," interposed Edgar.

"Not at all," said Laurence. "Unless I have dipped into Irish mythology to very bad purpose, the banshee is not the spectre of a person that ever lived at all, but a sort of fairy, who is attached to ancient families alone, and announces the death of any of their members by perpetual lamentations."

"I perceive that I did not put my question with sufficient accuracy," observed Maximilian. "When I asked if you had ever heard of such a thing as the ghost of a living person, I was not thinking of a spectre predicting death, as in the case of the fetch, but of the appearance of the preternatural likeness of a person, without any reference to death at all. However, I may as well narrate the story by which my question was suggested. Matthias Lüssau, a pastor at Rathenow, on the river Havel, during the time of the Thirty Years' War, stood one evening at the window of his house, whence he perceived two persons, busily digging as if they were in search of some hidden treasure. One of them looked exactly like his churchwarden, and to this one he addressed himself, asking what was the object of such zealous toil. The digger explained that in the days when the town had been occupied by the Swedes——"

"That occupation, I suppose, was one of the events of the Thirty Years' War?" interrupted Egbert.

"Precisely," said Maximilian. "In those days, as the spectre explained, a general pillage had been expected, and consequently he and his comrade had buried the sacred vessels of their church in some neighbouring spot, the exact situation of which had, perhaps, through the effect of panic, entirely vanished from their recollection. Matthias Lüssau went to bed, pondering on this conversation, and on the following morning sent for his churchwarden, whom he questioned respecting the hidden treasure. The man started, as if aroused from a dream, and honestly confessed that such

a treasure had been buried by him and his associate in office in the time of the Swedes, that the place where they had hid it had been completely effaced from their memory, and that after much fruitless search, they had given up every thought of making good their loss, and had forgotten the affair altogether. Satisfied with this explanation the pastor conducted his churchwarden to the spot, where the diggers had been occupied the evening before, and as this was at once recognised by the churchwarden, good earthly substantial diggers were set to work, and the vessels, duly discovered, were restored to the church.

"That," gravely remarked Laurence, "is a very curious story. The churchwarden neither dies, nor is about to die. Simply his memory has become defective with regard to one particular event, possibly, as you say, through the effects of panic, and the loss occasioned by his forgetfulness was made good by a spectre, who assumed his likeness."

"We may almost say," suggested Edgar, "that the apparition was the ghost of the churchwarden's departed memory. Those who would give a rational turn to this odd tale would substitute somnambulism for supernatural agency. I perfectly recollect a short French drama, the plot of which much resembled the story of your worthy pastor. A perfectly honest man, intrusted with a large sum by a friend, has put it away in a place of safety. When the friend, after a long absence, returns, producing the receipt for the deposit, the treasure is missing, and the man to whom it has been confided is in despair. Falling asleep, he proceeds, still sleeping, to his garden, and there he digs up the lost casket. He had hidden it in a state of somnambulism, and in a state of somnambulism he finds it, the act of concealment having left no impression on his waking mind. Put a sleep-walking churchwarden in the place of your spectre, and you will at once perceive the analogy between your legend and my plot."

"Ah, I perfectly perceive the analogy and the insinuation," said Maximilian, smiling; "and, as Matthias Lüssau was famous in his day for laying perturbed spirits, I will tell you another story about him, which, though less singular, shows him in a less equivocal character. You must know that in those days of Swedish occupation referred to by the spectral churchwarden——"

"Spectral or sleep-walking?" interposed Edgar.

"In those days," pursued Maximilian, "the city of Rathenow was found too small for its intrusive visitors. One company of Swedes seemed destined to remain without shelter, the only place in which it could possibly be quartered being universally stigmatised as a haunted house. To all warnings on this score the soldiers, however, turned a deaf ear, and they accordingly took possession of the awful edifice, providing themselves, not only with abundant meat and drink, but likewise with a few fiddles, in the determination to pass a merry night. At the hour of twelve, while they were in the middle of a dance, a man like a farmer, with a whip in his hand and a bundle of deeds under his arm, walked into the room, and was followed by a lady, who wore a great bunch of keys. These unbidden guests made no attempt to interrupt the merriment of the party, but remained near the door, quietly watching their proceedings. The dancers came to a sudden stop, an awkward pause ensued, which terminated in a roar of laughter from the soldiers."

"Were the ghosts gratified?" inquired Edgar.

"On the contrary," answered Maximilian; "they were highly incensed, and manifested their wrath to some purpose. So vigorously did the man use his whip, and the lady her keys, that the soldiers were only too glad to get out of the house, the majority escaping by the windows, the minority by the doors. One only remained, a dunder-headed fellow, who had fallen asleep behind the stove, and had there lain in blissful ignorance of the defeat of his comrades. When at last he awoke, and saw the spectral virago with the keys, he also retreated, though she begged him to remain, assuring him that, as he had not been guilty of the impertinence of laughing at her and her companion, no harm would be done to him."

"Why should these extremely muscular Christians be called ghosts at all?" inquired Edgar.

"Oh," answered Laurence, "the ghosts in Brandenburg and thereabouts are by no means destitute of physical strength, nor must they be associated with anything shadowy or ethereal. Why, the story is told of one Martinus Schoock, an old professor at Frankfort-on-the-Oder, who was, for awhile, very proud of his disbelief in spirits, but was cured of his heresy by most substantial reasoning. Putting up one night in a strange inn, he gave no heed to the host's warning that the only empty room was haunted."

"Therein resembling the Swedish soldiers in Maximilian's tale," interposed Edgar.

"He boldly ordered his bed to be made," continued Laurence, "and retired to rest. About midnight a most unseemly noise began; and at last in came somebody with an enormous crash, who, heavy of foot, stalked up to the professor. Had the learned gentleman preserved his usual courage, he would have noticed with curiosity that his visitor was dressed in an old German military fashion; but as he instantly drew his head under the clothes, his powers of observation were nullified. Sight, however, was not the sense to which the ghost especially appealed. It deliberately pulled the clothes from the trembling Schoock, thrust him under the bed, and quietly lay down in his place. After having reposed for about an hour, it took its leave, the professor, uncomfortably situated as he was, having passed the time in fervent prayer. On finding himself alone, Schoock dressed himself with all possible speed, hastened down-stairs, and paid his reckoning to mine host, who, observing that he looked exceedingly pale, asked if he had seen anything unpleasant. The professor, though his voice faltered, had the presence of mind to say he should like to know who had been playing tricks upon him, and departed accordingly."

"He had hit upon the truth, however," exclaimed Edgar. "A plainer case of playing at ghosts was never recorded."

"If all accounts be correct, Schoock's convictions were not the same as yours," said Laurence. "If he kept up his character for the moment of talking about tricks, he was never afterwards heard to speak sceptically or disrespectfully about ghosts. But to show you further the substantial character of the Brandenburg spectres, let me tell the anecdote of a distiller of Stendal in the Old Mark, who, hoping to make his liquor particularly attractive, obtained the head of a thief who had recently been hanged."

"Was the notion his own?" asked Edgar.

"No," replied Laurence. "There was an old superstition that the skull of a thief, properly distilled, yielded a spirit which might advantageously be mixed with brandy."

"I think we had better keep the knowledge of that fact to ourselves," suggested Edgar. "So many modern ways of adulteration have been tried over and over again, that an extraordinary method, unknown to the present generation, might be

snapped up with avidity, to the manifest detriment of the public. On the other hand, I admit that the superstition might easily furnish the subject for a story in favour of total abstinence. The teetotal moralist might say that Stephen of Stendal (not a bad name) was an 'honest, industrious man, until an unlucky glass of schnapps, followed by many others, weakened his veneration for the laws of property. A robbery, accompanied by a murder, resulted in his execution. Nor did the mischief done by his first glass end even here. After his death, his skull was used for the production of that very liquor which had brought destruction upon himself, and who shall say that the miserable pedigree of crime and retribution was not carried down, in one unbroken line, through many generations? The brandy makes the thief, and the thief's skull makes the brandy. Thus we have a complete circle, a very serpent of wickedness, with its tail in its mouth. Mind you, this is no legend, but my own invention."

"My legend in the meanwhile stands still," remarked Laurence; "but let me proceed. At night, while the distiller and his assistants were engaged in the unholy work of improving the brandy, who should walk in but the thief himself. For some time he stared at the party in silence. At last he said in a solemn voice, 'Give me back my head.' Now, what say you to that?"

"Why, I say," answered Edgar, "that the thief was very unreasonable. He evidently had a very good new head, or he could not have stared at the party, so he had no occasion for the old one, which had been justly forfeited to the offended laws of his country."

"Pardon me," interposed Maximilian, who had long preserved a modest silence, "I have been much amused by Laurence's two stories; but I would observe that my tale of the ghosts of Rathenow is not ended yet."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Edgar. "Well, I thought it had ended brilliantly with the defeat of the Swedish soldiers."

"So did I," added Laurence.

"If you remember," said Maximilian, "I promised to give you another chapter of the biography of the famed Matthias Lüssau, and I had not yet brought him upon the scene. That, with your consent, I will do now." (Both bowed with a somewhat contrite air.) "Having heard of the victory achieved by the two ghosts, Matthias felt that an adventure was before him quite

in his own way. He had no disbelief in spectres, like your braggart Schoock. On the other hand, he believed in them as thoroughly as Jack-the-Giant-Killer believed in giants, and he was likewise convinced that he was a match for the best of them. So with the permission of the magistrate he took possession of the house one fine night, having first armed himself with a pen and other writing materials, and in the room, which seemed to be the battle-field, he seated himself at a table, on which two candles were placed. He had handsomely offered his clerk a share in the adventure, but the prudent man preferred to remain in the street outside the house, and to act as a sentinel. At twelve o'clock the door opened and the man with the deeds and the whip walked in, and took his place in a very becoming manner, though it should be observed that immediately after his appearance one of the candles went out. The undaunted pastor at once rekindled it with the other, whereupon the lady with the keys appeared, and out went the other candle. Having rekindled this with the first, Matthias thought that the time had arrived for serious discussion; so fixing his eyes on the two spectres, and beginning with a pious address, he boldly asked what their business might be. With every appearance of respect the man with the deeds unfolded a narrative of considerable length, and not a little intricate. He had once been owner of the house, and of much landed property besides, as he proved by his deeds; but what with a fraudulent steward, and a disobedient nephew, and a designing son-in-law——"

"Skip the details," suggested Edgar. "We'll assume that somehow or other a wrong, that required to be rectified, had been committed."

"Right," said Maximilian, "and the case of the lady was much the same as that of the gentleman. Well, Matthias put down in black and white all the particulars, which I pass over, promised to set matters straight, and bade the ghosts retire to rest, and not trouble the world any more with their presence. He kept his promise, the cases were submitted to the proper authorities, the rightful heirs were put into their proper places, and the house, no longer troubled, was presented to Matthias Lüssau as a free gift, and long afterwards bore his name."

"Was the gallant pastor always equally victorious?" asked Laurence.

"No," replied Maximilian; "I regret to say that the courage with which he pursued

his vocation of ghost queller brought him to an untimely end. He heard that a subterranean burial vault was haunted by a troop of noisy spirits, and resolved to encounter them. He accordingly descended into the vault, but was saluted with a diabolical howl, the spirits violently assuring him that, while they were underground the right was on their side, and that if he did not speedily retreat, some mischief would befall him. He took the hint, but the terror he had felt, and possibly also the humiliation of his defeat, threw him into a sickness, which resulted in his death. But he lived long in the memory of his fellow-townsmen. He was an able negotiator with men as well as with ghosts, and when Rathenow surrendered to the Swedes, he arranged the capitulation so much to the satisfaction of the citizens and of the Swedish general, that the latter presented him with a box shaped like a book, but filled with gold coins. For many years his portrait was preserved, representing him as a stern, resolute man, with a book under his arm, which was commonly taken for a Bible, but which was meant for the Swedish present."

"As he negotiated the capitulation equally to the satisfaction of both parties, what present did he receive from the citizens?" asked Edgar.

"None, of which I have heard," answered Maximilian.

"Ha!" said Edgar, gravely, "I wonder whether the affair was conducted with the strictest impartiality."

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LXIV. AT THE TERRACE DOOR.

NEXT morning, when Maud awoke, she saw Mercy Creswell sitting near the window, playing a "devil's tattoo" on the window-stool, and staring out with all her eyes, and a strained neck, on the scene below.

"Oh! Mercy, you are there?" said the young lady, drowsily, with her head still upon her pillow.

"Yes, miss, please," said Mercy, standing up promptly with a grave countenance.

"What o'clock is it, do you know?" inquired Miss Vernon.

Miss Mercy consulted the big silver watch which she wore at her belt, and which, if not quite so pretty as some little gold ones we may have seen, had the advantage of keeping time a good deal better.

"Half-past ten, miss."

"Half-past ten! And why did not you call me before? Breakfast over, I suppose, and—and Lady Mardykes, has she come?" she added, recollecting that if her hostess were still absent, she would not after all have cared to go down to the breakfast-room.

"Yes, ma'am—yes, miss, half an hour ago, Lady Mardykes harrived."

"Oh? I'm so glad, that is quite charming; now if Miss Medwyn were here, I think I should have nothing left to wish for."

And in high spirits, notwithstanding the alarms of the night before, Miss Vernon addressed herself to her toilet, while her breakfast came up on a pretty china tray to the adjoining dressing-room, which was a large and comfortable apartment, commanding precisely the same view of the croquet-ground as she saw from her bedroom window.

As Miss Vernon entered the dressing-room, a dark-featured, low-browed housemaid, standing by the gallery-door, with a pale frown, and in low tones was saying to Mercy Creswell, who was listening with a dark gaze, and compressed lips, with the corners of her mouth drawn grimly down:

"An oak stool, all in *that*," and she clapped her hands. "You never seed sich another smash in the dead-house. Tom Rose was nothing to it. Lauk! it was a turn! I couldn't eat not that big o' breakfast!"

Mercy saw the young lady coming in, and shifting her place, she said in a quick aside, "Here's Miss Vernon."

And with a glance at her, the broad-shouldered lass in housemaid's uniform withdrew and closed the door.

"What was she talking of?" asked the young lady, when she had gone.

"An old story, miss; a man that was killed here years ago; poachers I dessay, or the like."

"Oh, a keeper?"

"Well, yes; something that way, miss. Shall I pour you out tea or coffee, please, miss?"

Her breakfast equipage Maud thought a great deal handsomer than was required for the careless service of a bedroom. The china was old and quite exquisite; and the silver, an antique Dutch miniature service, was covered with grotesque figures, trees, windmills, cocks and hens. Every detail in the little breakfast service was pretty and even elegant, a great deal prettier, certainly, than her mamma would have allowed her at Roydon.

Looking down she saw from the window a very animated scene, people in gay dresses were walking on the terrace, and upon the gravel walks that surround the croquet-ground, on which were already assembled some lounging groups, who were knocking the balls about in a desultory way. The cheerful sounds of talking and laughing filled the air. Some of these people, foreigners she supposed, were very demonstrative in their talk and gestures. And a dozen or so of the heterogeneous company who were making the large square, with the background of old Dutch hedges, and lofty timber, as amusing for her to look at as a fair-green, or a race-course, were dressed extremely oddly, not to say grotesquely. There were at least ninety or a hundred people in that pretty enclosure. Some might possibly be merely visitors for the hour, but still the number assembled testified to a very splendid hospitality.

As Maud was looking out, she saw Lady Mardykes enter the terrace from the door in the side of the house, almost directly under her window.

This, you may suppose, was a very welcome sight to her.

Automarchi was walking at her side, and they seemed to be talking incessantly, as they walked slowly round the croquet-ground, and sometimes with very earnest gravity.

Did it strike her that Lady Mardykes was distinguishing this stern and striking man, in a very marked way? He seemed to engross her. She stopped and spoke to but one other person, as she walked round and round the quadrangle. She had seen her guests, no doubt, since her arrival, before now; but she seemed, at present, to have neither eye nor ear for any one but Automarchi.

He seemed very devoted, she thought. Might he not possibly entertain hopes which she had not suspected before, respecting this rich and brilliant widow? What was the meaning of her delegating to him, as he had said she did, even playfully, a commission to see after the health and spirits of her guests, during her absence?

And now Maud remembered a laughing warning given to her by this same Lady Mardykes, in answer to some speculations of hers about mesmerism. She said, "Don't allow any one to mesmerise you, unless you want to fall in love with him." Then came her special mention of Doctor Automarchi, in the letter in which she pro-

mised to have him at her house, to meet Maud, as a potent mesmeriser.

Was this clever foreigner really on the high road to fortune and social position? Things as strange had happened.

Some illustrated papers had been sent to her at the same time with her breakfast, and Maud, taking one of them up, looked into her room, intending to take her paper-cutter from the table beside her bed, but it was not there.

She had left it on the table herself, beside her book, and she had seen it there afterwards; and by one of those accidents that sometimes fix trifles in the memory, she had remarked it as it lay in the same place, on her return, after her long look-out from the window, the night before, to her bed.

"Mercy, did you take my paper-knife from the table beside my bed? I did not remove it; look for it, please, and fetch it to me."

"Me move it! Certainly not me, miss. La! miss, I would 'av' knewed you put it there, but I wasn't a step nearer than the window, till you woke up and called me."

She was fidgeting about the table by this time.

"No, miss, I don't see no sign of no knife, paper or hotherwise. No, miss, nothing."

"But I would not lose that pretty little paper-knife on any account, and it *must* be there; no one has been in the room to take it, and you really *must* find it."

But nowhere could the paper-knife be found. It was hardly the sort of thing which a thief would have selected for a prize, seeing on the table close by all the rings and trinkets that might have been as easily picked up.

"It was given me by a person I was very fond of, who is dead, and I won't lose it," said Miss Vernon, joining in the search, after an interval; but it did not turn up.

"La! miss, it must be a mistake. Where could it go to? If it was there, miss, last night, 'twould be there still; there's no signs on it; 'tis only worriting yourself, miss, to suppose it was ever there at all."

"I happen to know it was," said the young lady, nettled at this irritating line of reply, "and you must find it. I shan't go down-stairs till I am satisfied about it."

"What was it like, please, miss?"

"It is a small mother-of-pearl paper-cutter, that answers as a marker beside, and it has my initials, M. G. V., on the side."

Maud was really vexed, and having a

regard for this trifle, was resolved not to lose it; her attention was, however, called to another quarter by a gentle but distinct knock at the dressing-room door. A visit from Lady Mardykes, she thought, with a smile, as she stepped into the dressing-room, and called to her visitor to come in.

It was Doctor Antomarchi who opened the door, and made her a grave and very ceremonious bow. Maud was a little surprised.

"I fancied it was Lady Mardykes who knocked at my door," she said; "I was thinking of going out; I saw her from the window."

"Oh? I'm commissioned to make this little visit, to inquire how you have passed the night. Your nerves were a little more disturbed than you would allow by the shock of that unlucky rencontre on the road. I'll try your pulse, if you don't mind. Yes—yes—still nervous. You can have your walk quite safely in the croquet-ground, but don't think of taking a drive to-day, and you had better lunch and dine quietly up-stairs; to-morrow you will be, I hope, all right, and then, of course, you command everything."

Antomarchi remained for a few minutes, and chatted on agreeably upon other things. He is apparently anxious to please; nothing could be more polite; but his smile is not winning. There is something in it she can't describe, deathlike and cruel. In his manner, soften it all he can, there is a latent sternness that might be prompt and terrible.

His large strange eyes, as if conscious of their power, he has not turned upon hers. In this slightly but studiously averted gaze, there is a hinting of treason.

When he is gone, Maud says to herself:

"Well! is it possible that nice creature can have taken a fancy to that horrible man? She certainly can't see him as I do. However, I suppose there is a charm, if one could only see it, in the sinister as there is in the beautiful."

"Well, miss, I have looked everywhere, and high and low, and I can't find no such a thing; you couldn't have forgot it at Roydon, unbeknown to you?" said Mercy, returning from her search for the penknife.

Maud extinguished this theory peremptorily, and asked:

"Are you quite sure that no one was in that room except you and me?"

"Not a living soul, miss. Who could?"

Maud was now putting her things on

for her little walk, and she called for her scissors from her dressing-case.

"You can have mine, miss, please."

But the young lady preferred her own.

"I don't see no scissors there, miss——"

"Well, my penknife must do."

"Nor no knife, miss; only a few things."

Now came another alarm, another search, and a new disappointment.

"I can't understand it!" exclaimed Maud. "It is just possible, to be sure, as you say, that Jones may have left them out, and forgotten them. I'll write to her. But it is so unlikely, that I can't believe it. I really don't understand all this. I can't account for these things."

Maud's fiery eyes were upon Mercy Creswell as she thus spoke.

The fat freckled maid, with her chin rather high, tossed her head, with an air rather of defiance, and an assumption of offended dignity. But her eyes could not bear the frank gaze of her young mistress, and were unsteady and confused. She looked, in fact, extremely put out.

"I hope, miss, you don't suppose there's no one about you, miss, as would do any such a thing as to make free with a lady's dressing-case. There never was none in this house but honest servants, nor none, I expects, as would so much as think of any such things, no not for the minds of Peru! And as for myself, I hope, miss, you don't think or imagine you're not as safe as the queen's jewels with Mercy Creswell, which I can get a character, as many as I likes from Lady Mardykes, or from your own mamma, miss, Lady Vernon of Roydon, not to mention a many a lady besides, as would travel a many a mile to say the same for me, if so it was I stood in need of any such a thing."

But Maud, not a bit daunted, had nothing more satisfactory to add.

"Charming!" thought Maud, "if in addition to her other accomplishments she should turn out a rogue! I wonder when mamma will allow me to have poor Jones back again."

The young lady, with her hat and jacket on, was now ready to go down.

"I'm not sure, Mercy, that I should know the way; you must come with me to the top of the stairs. I shall find out the rest of the way myself."

So they set out together, and Maud looked about her with some curiosity.

It was a vast house, and the gallery, the flooring of which was warped and ridged with age, was dark and dismal enough almost for an ogre's dwelling. On the way

to the head of the stairs other passages crossed, in gloomy perspective, and in them they passed, here and there, several housemaids, with something, she could not exactly say what, a little unusual about them. They were in a sort of uniform; all wearing exactly the same strong, plain, dark-blue dress, white aprons, and neat caps. Lady Mardykes, she thought, enlists her servants and rules her house with a military eye. Those servants looked reserved and thoughtful, but, for the most part, good-natured; they were all above thirty, and some past forty, and all looked remarkably firmly knit and strong; an extremely serviceable corps.

Finally, Maud and her guide had to make several zigzags.

In one respect, among others, before reaching the great staircase, those lofty and sombre galleries differed very pointedly from those of Roydon; from end to end, not a single picture hung upon their dark panelling, and Maud felt relieved when she had escaped from this monotonous gloom, and stood at last at the broad stair-head.

She heard voices in the hall, and when more than half-way down the stairs, she saw a footman near the foot, and asked him:

"Can you tell me whether Lady Mardykes is in the drawing-room?"

"No, please, my lady. She's not there. I think her ladyship's in the croquet-garden.

"Will you please show me the way?"

So the servant preceded her deferentially, and led her at last to the door in the side of this great house, and opened it.

Maud paused for a moment. The spectacle before her was very different indeed from that which she had seen issuing from the same door, by moonlight, on the night before.

As a mere picture nothing could be gayer or more amusing. Such brilliant costume, so much animation, such curious contrasts! Such very odd people.

CHAPTER LXV. MAUD WALKS IN THE CROQUET GROUND.

MAUD descended the steps, and took the direction of the door opening into the court-yard. She looked at the people as they approached, lest by accident Lady Mardykes should pass her by on the broad gravel walk. People who had made their mark in the world no doubt, many of them. She longed to meet her hostess, and learn who was who, in this curious assembly.

In this distinguished and multitudinous company she was glad to perceive that she seemed to excite little or no attention. She was now near enough to the corner to be certain that Lady Mardykes was not upon this walk; at the end of it she turned to the right, down a new side of the square. Many groups, and many people walking singly, passed her. But neither did she see Lady Mardykes upon this walk.

She paused for a minute at its further angle, and looked across the croquet-ground, where two or three games were by this time in full activity, and the hollow knock of the roquet, and the bounding balls, and all the animated sights and sounds that attend the croquet game, for a moment drew her thoughts from Lady Mardykes, and her eyes from the search.

Among the players or spectators about the hoops, Lady Mardykes was not visible. Maud was beginning to feel a little uncomfortable. If Ethel Tintern had been there, or even Doctor Malkin, whom she had seen the night before, not to mention Maximilla Medwyn, she would have felt comparatively at her ease. But it was very awkward finding herself among such a crowd, without seeing a single face she knew.

She turned about. A very tall yew hedge, clipped in the old Dutch taste, rises there like a dark wall (those at the sides are comparatively low), and traverses the whole length of the quadrangle, opposite to the side of the house, high as the arcades of a cathedral aisle, with lofty and narrow doorways here and there, cut in this dark and thick partition. Possibly there is a walk within its shadow, and there she may at length discover her hostess.

As a little anxiously she is beginning to explore, intending to resume her search, she is accosted by a person whom she has observed before, as about the most singular if not the most grotesque of the figures she has passed.

He has been making a short promenade in the sun, backward and forward upon the walk close by, like a sentinel. He is one of the few persons there who seem to have observed her. He has bowed slightly, but very ceremoniously, as he passed her, but without raising his hat.

He is a man tall and well formed, with a short black cloak thrown Spanish fashion, in spite of the heat of the weather, across his breast and over his shoulder. He has a broad-leafed black felt hat, looped at the front with something that looks like a little buckle of brilliants. His face is dark and

handsome, with an expression of the most ineffable pride and self-complacency. His chin is high in the air, his movements are slow and graceful, he wears white kid gloves, and carries in his hand an ebony walking-cane, with a gold head, formed something like a crown, in which glimmers a brilliant. He is evidently dressed in "shorts," for the more advantageous exhibition of his handsome legs; so far as they are visible, that is, nearly to the knees, they are cased in black silk stockings, and he turns out his toes as he walks like Sir Christopher Hatton.

In Spanish first, which Maud understood not at all, and then, with better fortune, in French, in which she had no difficulty in conversing, he, with a lofty but smiling courtesy, asked the young lady whether he could direct her, or give her any information which she might require.

Maud thanked him, and asked if he had seen Lady Mardykes, or could say where she was.

He had seen her a little time ago, but he deeply regretted he could not say whether she was now in the garden or not.

"May I now," he said, drawing himself up to his full height with a smile of haughty urbanity, "venture a question in return?"

"Certainly," said the young lady. They were conversing still in French.

"It is this. Have you observed, I entreat, any peculiarity in me? I anticipate your reply. You have. You remarked that in accosting you I merely touched, without removing, my hat. The reason of that is not dishonourable. I have the very great honour to represent her majesty the Queen of Spain" (there was such a personage then) "at the court of St. James's. I cannot therefore uncover to a subject. You understand. It is alike my painful prerogative and my loyal duty. I must in all but a royal presence retain my hat. I need not say more. I see, with infinite satisfaction, how fully you assent. My servants, if indeed they were in attendance, as they ought to be, I should send with pleasure in quest of Lady Mardykes; but, alas! here, in the country, they always claim a privilege of irregularity, and are never to be found."

He made another stately bow, drew back a step or two to indicate that the audience was over, folded his arms, threw back his head, and smiled, with half-closed eyes, haughtily.

Miss Vernon passed under the tall arch in the dark green wall of yew, and found herself in a long and sombre walk, fenced

in by two solemn hedges of shorn foliage, between which but a few groups were now to be seen in the perspective. Some were walking before her in the same direction, diminished in the distance; others slowly approaching. The people who made their promenade in this walk were, possibly, of a graver turn of mind than those who kept the sunnier haunts. Nevertheless, now and then they would pause in their sauntering walk to stand before one of the open archways, and look out upon the croquet-ground and its amusing vicissitudes and garrulous players.

A gentleman walking with two ladies, and conversing gravely, seemed to observe her solitary state and evident search for some missing friend, and politely inquired, taking off his hat, whether he could do anything for her. In reply to her question, he told her that it was more than half an hour since he had seen Lady Mardykes, and rather thought she had left the croquet-ground, but could not be quite certain. If she would permit him, he added, perhaps prompted to this heroism by her striking beauty, he would have pleasure in assisting her in her search—an exertion which Maud, with many thanks, declined.

Mr. Darkdale, in a long, ungainly black coat, such as she thought she had seen Jesuits wear, and with a book under his arm, passed her by, a few moments later, at a brisk pace. His stern mouth and dark face were thoughtful, and his broad forehead lowered, and as he passed her, from their corners, his penetrating brown eyes for a moment fixed on her face; he made no sign of recognition, however, but glided with a light tread, in a straight line, upon his way.

"That man never was a servant," thought Maud, as she passed him with a chill feeling of suspicion. "I thought he said, or mamma, or Mercy Creswell said, *some one did*, I'm sure of that, that he was simply to take care of me here, and then to go—I forget where—to some other place, and yet here I still find him domesticated! And I am nearly certain I saw him directing the men who were conducting that funeral last night. He is not what he pretends. A Jesuit, I dare say, he is. He is one of the first persons I shall ask Lady Mardykes to explain."

As she reached the further end of this cool and shadowy walk she saw, at her left, the walls of what had been an old-fashioned square tea-house, two stories high, such as used to fill an angle in the wall of a Dutch garden. Roof and floorings were now

gone, and the brick was covered with ivy, and looked very dark under the spreading branches of the tall trees that overhung the outer wall.

She turned aside to peep into this ruin. She had expected to find it empty; but it was no such thing. Inside was a thin old gentleman, with stooped and narrow shoulders, and a very long and melancholy face; he had a conical fur cap on, and large tortoise-shell spectacles, and was seated at a table, with an enormous ink-bottle beside him, totting up figures in a mighty book like a ledger. There were innumerable sheaves of papers, neatly folded and docketed, placed in order, upon the table at each side; and under it, and beside him, on the ground, was a huge litter, consisting chiefly of files stuck up to the very hooks with papers, and several leather bags stuffed, no doubt, with old balance-sheets and account-books. On a row of nails along the wall were hanging a series of "stock-lists," with the sparrows twittering above, and bees and flies buzzing about them in the ivy.

With a grimace as if he had suddenly crunched a sour gooseberry, this sage rose, with a stamp on the ground, and, jerking his pen behind his ear, gazed angrily at Maud, and muttered:

"Is not the garden wide enough for you and for me, madam? Saints and angels! How is it possible for an overworked old man to get through his business, interrupted as I am? Pray don't go for a moment; on the contrary, wait; the mischief is done. I claim this, because I want to prevent this occurring again. It is something to keep the complicated and never-ending accounts of this enormous house. It is something to make and direct all the prodigious investments that are going on, and to be able at an instant's notice to tell to a fractional part of a farthing what the entire figure is, and each item stands at, every day of the week. It requires an arithmetical secretary such as England does not see every day, to get all that within the circle of his head, madam. But when you are ordered to make up a tot of forty years' figures on pain of losing your splendid rights, at a single voyage, between morning light and setting sun, it screws too tight, you see, on an old fellow's temples." He pressed three fingers of each

hand on his temples, and turned up his eyes. "It is enough to make them burst in or out, by Heaven, like a ship! I remember the time I could have done it like *that*" (he snapped his fingers), "but we grow old ma'am, non sum qualis eram; and always interrupted, never quiet. Some one looks in; just as I have it, some one laughs, or a cock crows, or the light goes out; and I, simple as you see me, entitled to all that stock, unclaimed dividends, if I could only finish it, and bring my tots into court. It is a hard, *hard* thing with all that, and so exquisitely near it, to be still doomed at my years to a life of slavery! Always so near it, always so near; always interrupted. Here I came out to-day to take the fresh air in this place a little; shut up perpetually in my office, and just as I had got midway in the tot you look in, and—immortal gods! blessed patience! hell and Satan!—all is lost in one frightful moment of forgetfulness! Always so near. It makes one's thumbs tremble! Always blasted. It makes one squint. It is enough to make a man stark, staring *mad*! Pray make no excuses, madam. They waste time; you looked in; do so no more, and I'll forgive you."

He made her a short bow, placed his finger on his lip, turned up his eyes, and shook his head, with a profound groan, and addressed himself forthwith to his work again.

With a mixture of compassion and amusement, she left the den of this old humorist, into which she had unwittingly intruded, and continued her search.

A prepossessing young lady, dressed in very exquisite taste, walking slowly, and looking about her with an air and smile of quiet enjoyment and hauteur, hesitated as Maud approached, stood still, looking on her with a gracious and kind expression, and a countenance so riant that Miss Vernon hesitated also in the almost irresistible attraction:

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CHAPTER III. JULIET.

MR. PHILIP VANE was up early the next morning, intending to go off to town by the first express train, which left Wexeter soon after nine. He always travelled in first-class carriages and by express trains, always went to first-class hotels, asked for the best rooms, and lived on the most luxurious fare. He was one of those self-indulgent scoundrels, who always found it necessary to make an excuse for the manner in which they pet and pamper themselves. Mr. Philip Vane had a stock of these excuses, which he had used so long and so frequently, that he actually began to believe in them. Thus, in regard to his travelling, he was in the habit of saying that time was money, that it was important for him to waste as little as possible of the day upon the road, and that, travelling by express, he was enabled to transact business up to the last minute at the town which he was leaving, and to be ready to commence afresh, the instant he arrived at his destination. Also in regard to his selection of the best hotels and his luxurious habits generally, he would remark that as he depended entirely upon his own exertions for his income, it was necessary that he should keep himself in good condition, and obviate as far as possible the ill effects of the constant mental strain, by attention to his bodily comforts.

Listening to this style of conversation, one would have imagined that Mr. Vane was a professional man in large practice, a busy merchant, or a gentleman holding in his own hands the control of several large estates; instead of being, as he was, a very

common sharper, living on his wits. On those very rare occasions, when he permitted any of his more intimate associates to think that he was taking them into his confidence, he would speak of himself as "a kind of modern Ishmael, sir; a sort of fellow whose hand has been against every man, and who consequently has had every man's hand against him, but who has managed to get on tolerably notwithstanding!"

Those assertions, like most others emanating from the same source, were wholly and entirely false. Mr. Philip Vane's hand, instead of having been raised against every man, had generally passed its time in patting the shoulder, or gently insinuating itself under the arm of every man from whom he thought he could reap the smallest benefit. All things to all men was Mr. Philip Vane; specious, sly, frank, cunning, outspoken, reticent, just as suited the occasion. This hazy comparison of himself with Ishmael arose from the fact that he had never enjoyed the advantage of parental rearing. His earliest recollections were of the preparatory school in the suburbs of London, where, smallest among the small denizens of that little world, too small even to be placed in the lowest class, he roamed about the house and garden, and learned his alphabet from some elder pupil inclined to gratify his dignity by teaching him. There he remained for some years until old enough to be removed to a grammar school. Previous to this removal, he, for the first time, experienced that greatest of all delights of a schoolboy, the charm of "going home."

Home, as realised by little Vane, was a large house in a fashionable square in Brighton, belonging, as the child understood, to his uncle, his father's brother, a

leading physician of the place. Doctor Vane Philip remembered as a quiet little man with white hair and a thoughtful face, who used to pat the boy's head, and surreptitiously give him half-crowns — surreptitiously, that is to say, as far as concerned Mrs. Vane, a full-blown handsome woman, whom Philip always remembered with flowers in her cap, and a very red complexion. From the first, Philip had a dim, childish notion that the doctor was afraid of Mrs. Vane, whom, as the child learned in the course of time, he had married when a widow, and who had two sons, one with very large whiskers, and the other with a black and white dog. When the child came back for the next holidays, he learned that the dog-owning son had gone to Spain, which was a long way off, as he understood, to fight for something or somebody not clearly defined; but the other son with the whiskers was still there, and took Philip up to his bedroom, which was at the top of the house, and made him very sick by insisting upon his smoking a pipe, a proceeding which seemed fraught with great delight to the whiskered gentleman. When Philip came home six months afterwards, at Christmas, he found the house in sad tribulation, for the son with the dog was dead, and the son with the whiskers had gone to Australia, not, as the boy gathered from the talk among the servants and the visitors to the house, without having distinguished himself by squandering a vast amount of money and running very deeply into debt. The doctor, Philip noticed, was thinner, whiter, and more thoughtful than ever; and though Mrs. Vane wore as many flowers in her cap, she seemed to have dropped suddenly into an old woman, and shed her teeth as he had heard of deer shedding their horns, while her fresh complexion was; he noticed, muddled and streaky.

The boy never saw his uncle alive again; he was sent home from school to attend the funeral, and formed one of a very small procession, which, in the roaring wind and drifting rain, struggled up one of the back streets of the town to the little evangelical chapel, at which, at his wife's command, the kindly old doctor had given regular attendance, and in the burying-ground attached to which his remains were laid. After the ceremony the little funeral party broke up, the well-known yellow carriage of the physician who had paid the last respects to his old friend, stood at the churchyard gate, ready to bear him off on

his round of visits; an old school friend of the deceased, who had come down from town, jumped into a cab to catch the return train, and Philip and the lawyer got into the mourning-coach to return together. On their way back the lawyer told the boy that Mrs. Vane was not well enough to see him, but that he was to go back to school that evening as soon as he had had his dinner; then, to Philip's great wonderment, asked him whether he had read Robinson Crusoe and Philip Quarll, and whether he did not think he should like to be a great traveller like those heroes. The meaning of those questions was explained a few days afterwards, when the schoolmaster called him into the apartment which was alternately a reception-room and a torture-chamber, and instead of, as the boy expected, bidding him prepare for immediate punishment, told him that he was to leave school the next day for Plymouth, where his passage had been taken in one of the steamers immediately starting for the West Indies, he having been bound apprentice to a cousin of Mrs. Vane's, who was a merchant and planter in the island of St. Vincent.

Philip Vane went to Plymouth, and to the West Indies, but not to St. Vincent. Indeed, he carefully avoided that island, having, while on board the royal mail steamer Shannon, made the acquaintance of several young gentlemen who were going out to join Her Majesty's land forces, then quartered at Jamaica; and by whose aid he had, quick at games of skill and lucky at games of chance, turned the fifty pounds, with which he had been presented by Mrs. Vane's agent on sailing, into a sum worth four times the original amount. For two or three years he remained in the colonies enjoying the hospitality invariably extended there to every one who makes himself agreeable, living at the different messes, riding races for the officers, staying with the merchants at their up-country villas, and providing himself with pocket-money by bold and lucky card-playing. By the time that the desire to return to his native country became too strong to be denied, Mr. Philip Vane had mixed so much with the military, and was so thoroughly conversant with their manners and customs, that, on his arrival in England, he deemed it expedient to announce himself as Captain Vane. It was as Captain Vane, ostensibly fly-fishing for his amusement at Chepstow, but in reality hiding from the officers of the sheriff of Monmouth, acting in conjunction with their brother officers of Middlesex, that he made the

acquaintance of Miss Pierrepont, who at the time was acting in that ancient town. His intentions toward that young lady were at first strictly dishonourable, but finding that she was not to be won by anything short of the marriage ceremony, and believing that he saw in the development of her talent the foundation of a future income for himself, he honoured her by making her his wife. Captains becoming somewhat common, he gave himself a kind of billiard-room brevet, and appeared as Major Vane, under which title he was favourably known in a shady fifth-rate little club, composed of adventurers like himself, and their victims, calling itself by the high-sounding name of the Craven, and locating itself in a dingy little street in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly: had his presence "remarked" by the reporters of sporting newspapers as a regular attendant at the principal turf meetings, and led that odd sort of flashy, swindling, disreputable existence which has so many votaries in the present day. Though two years had passed since his marriage, he had never introduced his wife to any one, and had insisted upon her keeping their connexion secret, even from the little sister who was her sole relative. From time to time he appeared at places where she was acting, as he had just appeared at Wexeter, giving her the benefit of his society sometimes for a longer, sometimes for a shorter period, but invariably insisting, whether present or not, on receiving two-thirds of the salary which she earned by her exertions, and leaving her and her sister to subsist on the remainder.

Had the salary thus earned been tolerably large, it is not improbable that Major Vane's conjugal attentions might have been greater than they actually were, but the major confessed to himself that his matrimonial speculation, as a speculation, had been a failure. In confidential communication with himself, the major did not scruple to own that he had not much regard for his wife. Even when he perpetrated marriage, it was from the commercial aspect that he regarded the step, and from that point of view it had been a decided failure. It ought to have turned out right; he himself could check off a score of instances in which worthy gentlemen, friends of his own, were deriving large sums from the theatrical earnings of ladies who were their acknowledged or unacknowledged partners: but these ladies were spirited persons, with little clothing and less grammar, whose portraits were in the photographers' windows, and

whose Christian names, affectionately diminished, were in the mouths of London generally.

More than once he had suggested to his wife that an equally glorious career lay before her if she only chose to embrace the opportunity and accept an engagement which, without his connexion with her being at all known, he could procure for her, but she invariably shook her head and refused, remaining at Wexeter, or some such dreary place, "doing her spouting," as he pleasantly but ironically called it, for a salary of three pounds a week and a benefit, which did not realise more than forty pounds.

Major Vane, however, was a philosopher. His marriage had been a mistake; he owned it to himself, but to no one else. And by the time that he had descended to the coffee-room to breakfast on the morning after the meeting in the lane behind the turnpike, he had thoroughly determined on ridding himself of the connexion at the first available opportunity. Meantime, he should receive the money for the benefit and the two-thirds of the week's salary, and when an opportunity offered itself, he should grasp it, and Miss Pierrepont would hear of him no more.

While the omnibus containing this large-souled gentleman was moving towards the railway station, Miss Pierrepont emerged from her lodging and made the best of her way towards the theatre. It was very early for a rehearsal, even at such an unconventional theatre as that of Wexeter, but with a view to see whether she could not make some effect in other than merely "spouting" parts, and thus please her husband, Miss Pierrepont had determined on playing for her benefit the part of Phoebe in *Paul Pry*, one of those waiting-maids known only to the stage, who carry their hands in the pockets of their little black silk aprons, who are the chosen recipients of their young mistresses' secrets, and the terror of the lives of the elderly gentlemen, their masters. Phoebe has songs to sing, and the leader of the band, who like every other person in the theatre would have done anything for Miss Pierrepont, was coming early to try them over with her; Phoebe has a certain amount of interchange of repartee with the principal character, and the low comedian, whose notion of repartee consisted in making faces at the gallery, and whose "dry humour," so often lauded, resolved itself into forgetting his part, and substituting the slang sayings of the day, was coming to "go through

their scenes." After that there was a full rehearsal of *Romeo and Juliet*, which was to be the leading piece on the benefit evening; so that it was tolerably late in the day before Miss Pierrepont's work was over.

Just as she was moving toward the stage-door, she felt her arm touched, and a low voice said in her ear:

"Won't you speak to me?"

Turning round she saw Gerald Hardinge; he was dressed in his working garb, a loose canvas jacket and trousers, spotted here and there with great daubs of paint.

"Mr. Hardinge!" she cried, putting out her hand.

"No," he said, drawing back, "I cannot shake hands with you now; I have been at work and have not had time to wash the traces of it off. I looked down from the 'flies' and saw you were going away, so hurried down to stop you, as I have something to say to you."

"I am very glad you did; I was sorry to have missed you last night——"

"Yes," interrupted the young man, "but we cannot talk here in this passage with the wind blowing in, and old Gonnop listening to every word. Come down on to the stage, there is no one there now, and we can have it all to ourselves."

She turned back, and passing through the littered mass of disused scenery stacked up against the walls, they went down on to the stage, now but very partially illumined by a faint gleam of light, coming through the window at the back of the distant gallery. For a minute neither of them spoke, then Miss Pierrepont said:

"What has kept you at work so late to-day, Mr. Hardinge? I have heard of no new piece in preparation."

"No," he said, "there is nothing new, only I think it would be a disgrace to the theatre if we put on that worn and ragged old pair of flats for the garden scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, and I persuaded old Potts to let me touch it up afresh."

"Was it only for the credit of the theatre that you did that?" asked Madge, looking softly at him.

"Well, no, perhaps not," he said. "I dare say I should not have done it if it had been Miss Delamere's benefit, or if Miss Montmorency had been playing *Juliet*. You know well enough why I did it."

"You are a kind, good boy, Gerald," said Miss Pierrepont, softly laying her hand on his arm, "and never mind giving up your time, or taking trouble for me."

"Kind, good boy, am I?" said he,

petulantly; "it is very little I am able to do, but even that don't meet with much return."

"Gerald!" said Miss Pierrepont, "what do you mean?"

"Where were you last night?" asked he, turning suddenly on her; "where did you go to after you had finished here?"

"You have not the slightest right to ask me that question at all, Mr. Hardinge," said Miss Pierrepont, drawing herself up and looking straight at him, "and certainly not to ask it in that tone."

"I know I have no right," interrupted Gerald.

"But as I have no reason to be ashamed of what I did," continued Miss Pierrepont, without heeding him, "I do not mind telling you that I went to meet a person on important private business of my own."

"And you did not get back until nearly midnight," said Gerald.

"How do you know that?"

"How do I know it? Because I saw you return. I walked up and down the street in front of your door, from the time Rose told me you were out, until I saw you safe once more within the house."

"What, were you there during all that terrible storm?" asked Miss Pierrepont.

"Yes, I was! I did not mind that; there was far too great a storm going on within my breast for me to pay much attention to the thunder and lightning; I thought, perhaps, you had gone to meet some man, and I was nearly mad."

"My poor boy," said Madge, soothingly.

"Oh, Madge! Madge! if you only knew what I suffer through jealousy; all this morning I have been like a lunatic, looking down on to the stage, and seeing that old Boodle make love to you at rehearsal."

"But Mr. Boodle plays *Romeo*, Gerald!"

"Yes, I know all about that; of course he must do it; and he is fifty years old, and wears a wig and false teeth, but still I hate to see him or any one else come near you, or touch you."

"But why are you so jealous, Gerald?"

"Why? Because I love you. You know it, Madge, you know this, you are certain of it, and yet you ask me why I am jealous."

"Yes, Gerald," she said, in a low voice, her hand again falling softly on his arm, "I think you are fond of me; you have shown that you are, indeed, more than once."

"No, I have not!" he burst out; "I have no chance or opportunity of doing so! I only want to prove to you how much I love you! I hate the life you are leading,

and I want to take you away from it—I hate to see you stared at by a lot of senseless gabies, who think they are patronising you by clapping their hands and thumping their infernal umbrellas. I hate to see these brutes of officers—we shall have them all here on Friday night, I suppose—haw-hawing about the passages, and talking of you in their idiotic manner. I want to take you out of all this, I want to marry you and make you mine, and mine alone!”

“To marry me!” she said with a very sad smile; “you forget, Gerald, that I am six years older than you, and that I shall be an old woman——”

“I knew you would say that! I hate it; you shouldn’t say that,” he broke out, impetuously. “How many hundreds of men are there who have married women older than themselves, and lived perfectly happy lives! You make yourself older than you are by the hard work you do. I want to work for you, to slave for you, to make money that you may share it, to make a name that you may be proud of me, and I will do it yet. I am not always going to remain a drudge in a country theatre; I shall get the chance some day, and then, oh, Madge! how proud I shall be of you as my wife!”

“You are a foolish boy,” she said, bending her deep hazel eyes full upon him, “and must not talk to me in this way.”

“No,” he said, curling his lip and shrugging his shoulders, “such talk is idle now, I know; I know I have nothing to offer now. If I ever had the chance of attaining a position I would ask you to marry me, for then the knowledge that I was fighting for you would nerve me in the struggle, and you would not say ‘No’ to me then, would you, Madge?”

“You shall ask me when the chance arrives, Gerald,” said the girl in a low tone, “and I will answer you then.”

“That time may be nearer than you imagine,” said the young man. “Now, you have had a long day, and will have to begin again shortly, let me see you to your home.”

It was Miss Pierrepont’s custom to lie down on her bed for an hour every afternoon before proceeding to the theatre, and thus prepare herself for the exertions of the evening. Visitors were refused admittance, perfect quiet reigned throughout the house, and Rose Pierrepont sat in the drawing-room with the door open, ready to rush out and scare away any chance irruption of cackling poultry, barking dogs, or

grinding organ men. On this day, however, though the house was as quiet and Rose as vigilant as ever, Madge Pierrepont could not sleep. She lay outside the bed, her long brown hair unloosed, hastily combed off her face and floating over her shoulders, her head resting on her hand, and an odd, wild gleam in her brown eyes.

“How wonderful,” she said to herself, “how wonderful that Gerald should choose to-day, of all days in the year, to say what he just said to me. I knew that he was fond of me, of course, I could not help knowing it, but he had never spoken so plainly as he did just now. What a contrast between what I heard last night and what I heard to-day! Philip grumbling at me for not making more money, grumbling at the sum, little enough but hardly earned, which I am able to send to him, dissatisfied because I have none of those accomplishments which, as he seems to think, alone go down with a London audience! And then this boy, hating the mere fact of my being compelled to appear in public, writhing under the notion that my name is bandied about in men’s mouths, and that I am a subject of discussion, however complimentary; anxious only to give me rest, and quite contented, as he says, to slave for me, and desirous only of fame that I may share it with him! And Philip tells me he ‘trusts me,’ and bids me dally with the boy’s affection, and see how much money can be made out of him! To that baseness I will not stoop! I will put an end to this nonsense altogether, I will no longer listen to—and yet how wonderfully soft and tender his manner is! Heaven knows my life is hard enough, a grinding servitude with only this one gleam of affection to light it up! And that I will not deny myself. No! the chance that Gerald talks of will never come. He will weary of me as Philip has wearied! Meanwhile, until he does so weary, I will not deprive myself of his society—no, nor of his worship—the only sunshine in my life!”

A BOOK FOR BRIDES.

I COULD fill, in a few minutes, an imperial bushel with French books specially and directly treating of marriage; the volumes discoursing of it indirectly are as numerous as the grains of wheat in an incalculable assemblage of imperial bushels. The majority of these, as far as I know them, are melancholy-inspiring works, sad to the heart, and repulsive to the moral feeling

of all who hope for elevation in human nature. I have fallen upon one,* however, which might be translated with advantage, for the perusal of English-speaking maidens.

It opens with the betrothal, a ceremony which, amongst civilised and Christian peoples, has dwindled down to a few consultations between families (even when it amounts to that), and a few words exchanged by the future husband and wife. But the Bible tells us how seriously it was regarded by the Hebrews, and to what an extent it bound the contracting parties. Breaches of promise of marriage, except for good and valid reasons, were things unheard of. The Israelites, faithful to their traditions, practise at the present day the ceremony of betrothal with the same solemnity as in olden time; or at least, if they do not take to the synagogue the very same presents that Joseph and Mary carried to the Temple, they still make their offering by breaking a vase before the altar.

To mark the importance and validity of a betrothal, the Council of Trent declared clandestine betrothals to be null and void. It required them to be celebrated before the curé, in the presence of two or three witnesses at least. Greater weight was afterwards given to this article by an ordonnance of Louis the Thirteenth, which forbade any notary (that is, any civilian) to sanction or receive any promise of the kind. Before the first French Revolution, such was the importance attached to this pious custom, that, except with an express dispensation from the bishop, a priest could not betroth and marry a young couple in the same day. It was requisite that a certain lapse of time, as a test of their fidelity, should intervene between the one ceremony and the other. The old French canon law had provided for the case in which a faithless fiancé should marry any other than his betrothed bride. The marriage, consecrated by a sacrament, was more binding than the simple engagement of betrothal; but if the culprit became a widower, and his first love required it of him, he was obliged to purge his guilt by taking her to wife.

The pervading thought of *Le Livre des Fiancées* is that Love and Duty are brothers, and not enemies. The great secret is, not to separate them. To those who love, everything becomes easy and agreeable. Our authors think they have dis-

covered the means of preventing married love from flying away. If that be true, their book may fairly claim to be called the *Book of Happiness*. Let the reader judge of its quality.

Before marriage there is unclouded sunshine. The young woman, adorned with the charms of her spring-tide, is kind and artless; she is careful not to err in her slightest actions. A good and provident genius, her mother, is always at hand to watch her movements, divine her thoughts, and to rectify whatever might tend to lead her astray.

The young man, captivated by those pleasing qualities which are heightened by his own enthusiastic imagination, ardently longs for the blissful moment when so charming a companion shall become his own. He loves, he hopes, he does his very utmost to please. Any defects he may have, like those of his fair one, are completely hidden. Each party is enchanted with the other.

Fear, then, the inevitable moment when illusions shall be dissipated, and commonplace daylight succeed to the hues of the prism. Meet it rather by preparing the means of avoiding successive falls from deception to deception. The ideal flowers which embalm the soul frequently fade for want of proper culture.

In the first place, fair readers, in order that unchanging love may take possession of your hearts and gain your husbands', you must trample underfoot the paltry ambition which has undone many charming women, who otherwise would have been adored, namely, the spirit of mastery.

To fulfil one's duties properly, it is necessary, above all, to know them thoroughly, and then to lay down a strict rule to oneself never to fail in their observance. Weak people are frightened at such a notion, and weak people suffer the consequences. A rare merit, for example, is to take a strict account of one's exact position, and then to conform oneself to it. How many young wives have created for themselves deception after deception, for want of having had the good sense to accept cheerfully certain rules laid down by their husbands! Which brings us back to the relative positions of husband and wife.

Civil and religious laws, which are not the work of arbitrary caprice but the consequence of the laws of nature, require that the wife should be obedient to her husband. She undertakes, in France, a solemn engagement, both before the magistrate and

* *Le Livre des Fiancées*, by Octave Féré and Vallentin.

before the minister of God. Twice she makes that promise on oath. No constraint is put upon her. Up to the last moment she has only to say "No," and the marriage does not take place—of which there are not infrequent instances. Why, then, should she revolt against this authority, thus freely accepted? Remain single, mademoiselle, if you have no inclination for the duties imposed on a wife. Many brides, while promising obedience, make a sort of mental reservation, which is equally offensive to honesty and to good sense. In all times, and in all countries, a chief is absolutely necessary. Attachment to a worthy prince thus becomes a virtue, because his person represents the country, which is the image of the common interest. In a family, which constitutes a little state, a chief is equally requisite. That chief is the husband, and all the members of the family owe him respect, submission, devotion.

Never persist in useless discussions with your husband. Should such begin, remember J. P. Richter's saying, "Many men resemble glass, which is smooth and inoffensive so long as it is unbroken; but which, once broken, cuts and pierces with every edge and angle." Doubtless, there are moments when it is difficult to restrain oneself—which increases the merit of self-command. By repressing any utterance of displeasure or acerbity, you will be better able to have a satisfactory explanation with your husband. There is great art in choosing the propitious moment. Remember, also, the words of Daniel Stern, "The vulgar complain of being hated, calumniated, or rejoice at being cherished, beloved. The wise man cares less about the sentiments he inspires, than about those he feels. He knows that what is really bitter and painful is, not to be hated, but to hate; that what is pleasant, noble, and great, is, not to be loved, but to love."

To sustain love a long time and transform it eventually into a warm and lasting friendship, it is requisite to keep one's heart above all weakness. The first thing is to inspire esteem; and esteem is not heedlessly bestowed, but must be won by an irreproachable conduct. Nor does this solid quality alone suffice; the form must be added to the substance; that is, you must be at the same time estimable and attractive. In the efforts you make with that intention, remember that "a woman has often more wrinkles in her temper than on her face."

It is not so easy as young wives imagine

to keep their husbands within household bounds. That is to say, those gentlemen often feel the wish to seek amusement elsewhere without their spouses. It is a hanging matter; but it happens only too frequently. Recollect that men, by marrying, renounce their most valuable possession—or, at least, what they consider such—namely, their liberty. Eh bien! women in general hardly appreciate the sacrifice sufficiently, and refuse to believe that their condition is at all changed in that respect. Nevertheless, you cannot help allowing that if men, by marrying, give up their liberty, your sex on the contrary (in France) gets married for the sake of acquiring more liberty. In exchange for this liberty which he valued so highly, a man expects some different kind of satisfaction. If he does not find it at home, he seeks compensating pleasures elsewhere. From that day the wife's existence is embittered. Her heart is full; and a brimful heart is as hard to carry as a brimful cup. The slightest shock causes it to overflow.

Whenever your husband returns to his home, invariably receive him with a pleasant smile. Accost him with warm and open cheerfulness; let your countenance express the delight you feel at seeing him again; let a day's absence appear, for you, as if it were a separation of a quarter of a century. It is the surest way to make him cheerful in return. Do not take the trouble to examine whether his countenance be anxious or no; above all, not to inquire whether he be good or ill tempered at the moment; drive from your thoughts the idea of ascertaining whether he is disposed to make himself agreeable; but display instinctively your expansive affection, and contrive cleverly to chase any dark clouds from his mind, if your warm reception has not sufficed to do so. Accustom yourself to address your husband with such frankness that he must see your soul is on your lips. Do we not all feel a natural sympathy for countenances which beam with cheerfulness?

If you say to yourself, "To-day I mean to be happy," it is a rash promise, a hasty project. But if you say, "To-day I mean to give some one pleasure," it is an amiable intention, which will rarely deceive your hopes. Such conduct is generous and delicate in the extreme, and cannot fail to bear good fruit. Delicacy, moreover, is the combined expression of the best qualities of the head and the heart. "The first fault committed by

married people," says Madame de Puisieux, "is the want of sufficient mutual respect and deference."

Observe, therefore, great consideration and deference for your husband's tastes and opinions. Such proofs of affection will both touch his heart and flatter his self-esteem. To have even the air of doubting your husband's judgment, capacity, and ability, will not only offend his allowable confidence in his own opinions, it does worse; it makes him suspect that your confiding love for him has ceased. Have we not enormous faith in those whom we really love? And do we not stand up for their personal merit as much as, or more than, we would for our own? Love forgiveth all things, hopeth all things.

Never lose sight of the principle that your duties to your husband ought to take precedence of all other duties. Let no excuse or pretext induce you to fail in them. Better, a hundred times better, to sacrifice every acquaintance, every friend, than to sacrifice one's own dear husband.

Carefully avoid appearing to despise your husband's friends. If you perceive that they are insincere, warn him of the fact with great precaution. If you believe it contrary to your interest that he should continue to frequent them, take great pains not to offend his self-esteem by the measures you adopt to wean him from them. It is a great humiliation to be obliged to confess that one has set one's affections on unworthy persons. If you can lead him to make the discovery himself, your object will be gained, with offence to no one.

Never strive to have the last word. Say what you want to say, and then change the conversation with tact and cheerfulness. The reverse of this too often takes place. A witty Englishman pleasantly remarked, "Two sets of men attempt a labour in vain. The first set try to have the last word with their wives. The second set, after they have had it, try to make them own that they have been in the wrong."

There are topics which must not be neglected because they are far from pleasant to treat of; amongst these is jealousy. Jealousy is the sister of Love, as Satan is the brother of the angels. Weep with love, but never with jealousy. Cold rains do not produce beautiful flowers.

To manifest the desire of possessing, to the exclusion of all other women, your

husband's affections; to display affectionate confidence, boundless devotion, and a preference for him above all other men, is no more natural than honourable. Such conduct inspires, and merits, a complete reciprocity of love. But to take offence, to become suspicious, and give way to ill humour, is to render oneself at once unjust and ridiculous. Coarse and violent jealousy is mistrust of the beloved object; subdued and smothered jealousy is mistrust to oneself. "Suspicion," says J. P. Richter, "is the base coin of truth." "When love turns jealous," says M. Müller, "he has a hundred eyes like Argus, but not two of his hundred eyes see clear." If your husband makes himself agreeable in society, and you impute it to him as a crime; if, on returning home, you pout, sulk, and treat him coldly, the consequence will be to make you insupportable, and you will pay dear for it before very long.

Domestic happiness is a work of patience; its continuance depends on moderation and prudence. It is only slowly and by degrees that we reach the summit of the ladder, whilst one false step suffices to precipitate us from the top to the bottom. It is certainly strange that, for years, young people are taught their grammar, "to enable them to speak and write correctly;" but no one has yet compiled a grammar, within the reach of ordinary capacities, to help them to lead a happy life. The *Livre des Fiancées* makes the attempt, relying mainly on the conjugation of the verb *aimer*, to love.

One thing which people do not always manage to avoid in a new-established household is monotony. It is, nevertheless, possible to combat this dangerous enemy, who has furnished the subject of unnumbered jokes, amongst which "*toujours perdrix*" stands conspicuous. A grand resource is to acquire a good store of conversation, to be augmented continually by reading and reflection. The quality called "*esprit*" by the French—cleverness, intellect, mental vigour, wit—is certainly improved by practice, quite as much as piano-playing is. The woman who exercises her conversational powers, polishing and repolishing them day by day, takes the sure steps to arrive at perfection. It will greatly help her, if she can lay down clear ideas and fixed principles respecting certain subjects. She can then speak of them lucidly and decidedly, which will not prevent her adopting a modest tone, and will also bring into greater relief the caution she will exercise, in giving

her opinion on questions she has not yet fathomed.

Practice, which produces the sharp debater, also makes the ready converser. It also gives the presence of mind which enables the exercise of repartee, and the faculty of parrying inconvenient observations in a manner which shall be amusing instead of offensive. Often, in the course of their lives, have women need of this useful power, of which men are so proud, when they possess it. And it really is no trifling advantage to be able to decide instantaneously, under difficult circumstances, what is best to say or do.

Young married women must expect their trials. There is no concealing the fact that men are not always perfect. They have their faults, like—everybody else. One of the worst is giving way to passion; and the great danger of this failing is that it tends to go on increasing; in which case, it would ruin the happiness of the household. If your husband unfortunately be so inclined, endeavour to check him at the very outset. A sensible woman has her arms ready at hand—amiability, gentleness, persuasion. Inspire your husband, whatever be his temper, with confidence, and, above all, with esteem and affection, and you will exercise over him a powerful influence. But beware of letting it appear that you are proud, or even conscious of that influence. The slightest symptom of such a feeling would inevitably offend your husband. The merest trifle would shake your empire. Moreover, by ignoring the authority of the head of the family, you make your husband ridiculous and lower your own consideration.

After the charms of your pretty person, what, think you, were the qualities which attracted your husband? Were they not the favourable opinion he conceived of your good management, your economy, the orderly life you led, your fondness for home? Henceforth and immediately let your actions prove that if you practised those virtues under your parents' eyes, it was because they were intimately bound up with your nature. It follows that a young wife's first care should be to render her home agreeable. Let her apartments be kept in perfect neatness, with order in the slightest minutiae, and abundant taste. When the eyes are flattered, the imagination easily yields to the charm. Let her also remember that simplicity is the coquetry of good taste.

If the poetic aspect of the household

offers great seductions, the material details of life must not be neglected; and to attend to these properly, great patience is often requisite. The most reasonable of men—pity they should—have their moments of irritation. The wife ought to keep to herself all the worries and troubles that spring from cooks, domestics, and seamstresses. All the husband wants is the result, which the wife will render as satisfactory as possible without disturbing his mind by recounting at length the difficulties she has had in accomplishing the feat.

Time has two wings, with one of which he wipes our tears, and with the other sweeps away our joys. Keep that second wing at a distance as long as you can. Happiness also has wings; and he is a bird who, having once taken flight, seldom perches twice on the same branch.

After this pretty little allegory we take leave of our Book for Brides, which contains a good deal of common sense, although it will not commend itself greatly to the strong-minded sisterhood.

OUR STUDIO IN THE WEST INDIES.

I "ROOM" with Napoleón Rodríguez y Boldú. We are both "followers of the divine art of Apelles"—at least so the local papers describe us—and we have pitched our tent in a Cuban town. Our tent is a Roman-tiled dwelling, consisting of six rooms on a single floor, with a wide balcony in front, and a spacious patio, or courtyard, at the back. We have no furniture worth mentioning; furniture in Cuba being represented by a few cane or leather-bottomed chairs, some spittoons, and a small square of carpet. But our walls are well hung with works of art in various stages of progress, which, in a great measure, compensate for the otherwise barren appearance of our apartments. Our studio is a spacious chamber on a level with the street which it overlooks. The windows occupy more than half of the wall space, are guiltless of glass, and are protected by iron bars. The accessories of our strange calling lend an interest to our domestic arrangements, and form a kind of free entertainment for the vulgar. To insure privacy, we have sometimes curtained the lower half of our enormous windows; but this contrivance has always proved ineffectual, for in the midst of our labour, the space above the curtains has been gradu-

ally eclipsed by the appearance of certain playful blacks who have clambered to the heights by means of the accommodating rails. Gentlemen of colour have little respect for the polite arts; they look upon our sanctum as a sort of permanent peep-show, and upon us as a superior order of photographers. Primed with these delusions, our Spanish Sambo comes for his *carte-de-visite* at all hours of the sunny day, persuaded that we undertake black physiognomies at four dollars a dozen; and when we assure him that ours is the legitimate colouring business, and that we have no connexion with Señor Collodión up the street, our swarthy patron produces a ready-made black and white miniature of himself, and commissions us to colour it in our best manner.

My companion has a weakness for bird-painting, and it pleases him to have the living originals on the premises. Therefore does our spacious court-yard contain a goodly collection of the feathered tribe, with one or two animals without feathers. A large wirework aviary is filled with fifty specimens of tropical birds with pretty plumage and names hard to pronounce. A couple of cocos—a species of stork, with clipped wings—run freely about the yard, in company with a wild owl and a grulla, a tall crane-like bird five feet high. In a tank of water are a pair of young caymanes, or crocodiles. These interesting creatures are still in their infancy, and at present measure only four feet six inches, from the tips of their hard noses to the points of their flexible tails. We have done our best to tame them; but they have not yet fallen into our domestic ways. Nor does time improve their vicious natures, for at the tender age of six months they have already shown signs of insubordination. If they persist in their evil courses, we must needs make a premature end of them, which is no easy matter, for their scaly hides are already tough as leather, and the only indefensible parts about them are their small eyes and open mouths. The cocos, male and female, are meagre-bodied birds with slender legs, and beaks twelve inches long. They are an inseparable couple, and wander about our patio and rooms in a restless, nervous fashion; rattling their chop-stick noses into everything. Now they are diving into the mould of flower-pots for live food, which they will never swallow till it has been previously slain. One of them has spied a cockroach in a corner, and in darting towards the prey a

scorpion crosses its path. The venomous reptile hugs the belligerent beak in the hope of conveying to it some of its deadly sting; but the tip of Coco's horny appendage is a long way from his tender points, and Scorpio must travel many an inch before he can make the desired impression. Meanwhile the stork has teased Scorpio's life out, and jerked his remains into that bourn whence no defunct reptile returns. Our coco's chief delight is to play with our painting materials, where much amusement may be derived by upsetting a bottle of varnish, or by distributing our long brushes in various parts of the room.

The tall grulla struts about with a stately step, and her ways form an interesting study. At night she is as serviceable as the best watch-dog, warning all trespassers by her piercing shriek, and by a furious dash at them with her strong neck and sharp-pointed beak. Grulla abominates all new-comers, and it was long before she was reconciled to the presence of her crocodile companions. When first their objectionable society was thrust upon the huge bird, she became nearly beside herself with vexation, and made savage onslaughts on the invaders' impenetrable hides. Once Grulla was in imminent danger of losing her neck whilst taking a blind header at the enemy's beady eye; for in a moment the reptile opened his yard of jaw for the easy accommodation of the bird's three feet of throat. My lady's behaviour at table leaves nothing to be desired. At the dinner hour she strides into our apartment without bidding, and takes her allotted place. The bird's two feet six inches of legs serve her instead of a chair, and her swan-like neck enables her to take a bird's-eye view of the most distant dish. But she never ventures to help herself to anything till the meal is actually placed on the plate before her; nor does she bolt her food like a beast, but disposes of it gracefully like the best educated biped. Jerking the article for consumption neatly into her beak, and raising her head high in the air, she waits till the comestible has gravitated naturally down her throat. The grulla's favourite dishes are sweet bananas, boiled pumpkin, and the crumb of new bread; but she is also partial to fresh raw beefsteak whenever she can get it. More than once have Grulla and her feathered companions formed subjects for fancy pictures by my artist partner. But productions like these have no attractions for the Cuban picture buyer, whose pictorial requirements are in-

deed rarely connected with the legitimate in art.

Assuredly high art does not pay in our part of the tropics, as we find after giving it a fair trial. Regardless of posterity, therefore, we abandon this branch of our avocation, and offer our art services for anything that may present itself. A *bonâ fide* painter is a rarity in the town I am describing, so Napoleón and I are comparatively alone in the fine art field. Our patrons are numerous, but we are expected by them to be as versatile as the "general utility" of theatrical life.

Most of our portrait work is connected with defunct people, for we cannot induce our patrons to believe that a living person is a fit subject for our brush. And so it often happens that we are summoned from our homes, doctor-like, at all hours of the night, to hasten to the house of a moribund, for the purpose of making such notes as shall afterwards serve as guides for a replica of the late lamented in his habit as he lived.

Happily, portraiture is not our only resource. We hold important professorships in colleges, schools, and ladies' academies, where we impart every accomplishment in which drawing-paper and pencils are used, including the art of calligraphy, missal-painting, and designing for fancy needlework.

Whenever a strolling company of Spanish players encamp for the season at the theatre, our services are required as the company's special scenic artists. The demand for scenery at the Teatro Real Cuba is, however, small; a divergence from its standard repertoire being considered as next to an infringement on public rights; so our labours rarely extend beyond an occasional property, or "set" in the shape of a painted "ancestor," a practicable piece of furniture, or a bit of bank for introduction into the elegant saloon, the cottage interior, or the wood scene. Once only are our scenic services in special request for a fairy piece, which the manager has announced with "entirely new decorations." Though the public believe that four months have been employed in the preparations, we have barely as many days for the purpose, and during this short space we produce that gorgeous temple which is destined to form a conspicuous feature in the well-worn wood scene, and we add to the native charm of the elegant saloon and the cottage interior with suitable embellishments. Dutch metal and coloured

foils, lavishly administered, cover a multitude of imperfections, and we have still the red fire and an indulgent public to fall back upon. Our efforts are rewarded by thunders of applause on the part of the audience, and eulogistic paragraphs in the local papers.

Upon another occasion we are required to adorn the principal thoroughfares in the town in honour of his excellency the captain-general, who is expected to visit us on his way to the Havannah. All the native talent is summoned to our standard, and helps us to disguise the streets through which his excellency is to pass. A couple of triumphal arches are to form important items in the decorations. Napoleón undertakes to erect one of these while I officiate at the other. Many "hands" are pressed into the service, and a whole month is devoted to the work. My companion's arch is to form a painted imitation of marble architecture of the Doric order, with trophies, flags, and mottoes suitable to the occasion. Mine is to represent part of an old feudal castle in the Norman style, and stands fifty feet above the pavement. The contrast produced between these formidable-looking buildings, and the primitively constructed Cuban houses of one story, is singular enough, and fills the native negro with wonder. His excellency the captain-general approves of the elaborate preparations for his reception, and communicates favourably with his government upon the progress and prosperity of our part of the colony.

Perhaps our greatest professional achievement is the decoration of the interior of a chemist's shop. An enterprising botecario applies to us one day, and offers us a large amount to paint and adorn his new shop in what he terms the Pompeian style. We have the vaguest notions on that subject, but so have also the chemist and the Cuban critics. We accordingly undertake the work, and manufacture something in which the Etruscan, the Rafaelesque, the Arabesque, and the French wall paper equally participate. In the centre of the ceiling is to be placed a large allegorical oil-painting, representing a female figure of France in the act of crowning the bust of Orfila. In the four angles of the ceiling are to be painted portraits of the Spanish physician, the Marquis of Joca, the English chemist Faraday, the Italian anatomist Paganucci, and the French chemist Velpéau. It takes exactly seven months to carry out our design, in the execution whereof we are

assisted by the native talent already alluded to. Amongst our staff of operators are a couple of black white-washers for the broad work, a master carpenter with his apprentice for the carvings, and an indefatigable Chinese, whom we employ extensively for the elaborate pattern work.

The chief objects of attraction in this great undertaking are without doubt a pair of life-sized figures of two celebrated French chemists, named Parmentier and Vanquelin, destined to stand in a conspicuous part of the shop. As there are no sculptors in our town it devolves as usual upon the "followers of the divine art of Apelles" to try their hands at the art of Phidias. Confident of success, the chemist provides us with a couple of plaster busts, representing the French celebrities in question, and bids us do our best. The fragments of drapery exhibited on these gentlemen enable us to decide on the kind of costume which our figures should wear; the one being indicative of a robe somewhat clerical, and the other evincing without a doubt that the original belonged to a period when knee-breeches and top-boots were much in vogue. The resources of Cuba for the making of statues are limited, so the material we employ is slight. We construct our figures upon the principle on which paper masks are made, and by painting them afterwards in imitation of marble, a very solid appearance may be obtained. I will not describe the many difficulties which we encounter at every stage of this process; but when the hollow effigies are complete, and we have fixed them to their painted wooden plinths, we are vain enough to believe that we have produced as goodly a pair of sham statues as you would see if you travelled from one extremity of Cuba to the other.

It is the night which precedes the opening of the chemist's shop, and we have retired to our dormitories after giving a final coat of marble-colour to our paste-board productions. I am about to tumble into my hammock, when my progress is arrested by a strange sound which seems to emanate from an adjoining chamber. I re-ignite my extinguished lamp, and take a peep within the studio. Something is certainly moving in that apartment. I summon my companion, who joins me, and we enter our sanctum.

"Misericordia! One of the statues is alive," I exclaim, horrified at what appears to be a second edition of Frankenstein.

Monsieur Parmentier—he of the periwig

and top-boots—is sinking perceptibly, though gradually. We advance to save him; but, alas! too late; the worthy Frenchman is already on his bended boots. The wooden props which supported his hollow legs have given way, and his top-boots are now a shapeless mass. We pause for a moment to contemplate the wreck before us, and immediately set about repairing the damage.

But how? A brilliant idea suggests itself.

In a corner of the studio stand the leather originals which have served us as models for the extremities of the injured statue. These same boots belong to an obliging shoemaker who has lent them to us. But what of that? The case is urgent, and this is not a time to run after our friend and bargain with him for his property.

To fill the boots with plaster-of-paris, to humour them, while the plaster is yet wet, into something which resembles the human leg divine, is the work of a few moments. To fix them firmly to the wooden plinth, and prop over them the incomplete torso by means of laths cunningly concealed, occupies little more than an hour and a half. A coat of thick white paint administered below completes the operation, and Parmentier is erect again, and apparently none the worse for his disaster. One more layer of paint early next morning, and the statue is faultless, and ready for being borne triumphantly from our studio to its destination. There it is placed in its niche, and no one suspects the mishap. Evening approaches, and with it come crowds of Cuban dilettanti and others who have been invited for the occasion. The ceremony of blessing the new undertaking is now solemnised according to custom by a priest and an assistant, who sprinkle holy water from a small hand-broom upon everything and everybody, while a short prayer in Latin is chanted. Then the guests proceed to examine the various embellishments of this singular shop, pausing to refresh themselves from the sumptuous repast which the chemist has provided for his guests and patrons in an adjoining chamber.

The statues form a subject for wonder with everybody, and no one will believe that they are constructed of other than solid material. Even the incredulous, who are permitted to tap one of Parmentier's boots as a convincing test, cannot help sharing the popular delusion. But our friend the shoemaker is not so easily de-

ceived. From certain signs, known only to himself, he recognises in the statue's painted extremities his own appropriated goods. We swear him to secrecy, and offer to pay him liberally for the loss he has sustained; and it pleases him to discover that in the pursuit of the fine arts—and as regards statue-making in the West Indies, we, echo the sentiment—there is nothing like leather!

A JULY TWILIGHT.

Falls the grey mantle of the twilight soft
Upon the cottage thatch: the rose-elad porch
Is fragrant with the coming dews of eve,
And distantly there glimmer in the sky
Rich veined streaks of crimson and of gold,
That mark the bright track of the setting sun.
The sheep-bell tinkles from the distant hills,
Where the white flocks upon the clover wold
Are folded for the night.

From bosky dell
The sweet clear clarion of the nightingale
Sounds forth his vesper hymn. Dies slowly out
The last faint gleam of light; with mellow ray
The silver star of eve peeps palely through
The clusters of the sweet-breathed jessamine,
What time, her white blooms, to the dewdrops yield
Their fragrant incense.

Yonder from the lake
Falls on the ear the muffled plash of oar,
The deep refrain of fishers, as they sing,
And homeward row from toil. The white moth skims
The surface of the pool; the dun bat flies
Swift round the ivied tower; the barn-owl hoots
Along the hedgerows; and the bark of fox
Sounds from the blackthorn copse:

And one by one
The lights go out within the lattices;
Drawn are white curtains gently o'er the pane,
Sounds the last glad "Good-night," and simple folk
Commend them to their slumber and their God!

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE IRELAND FORGERIES.

In February, 1795 (ten years after the death of Doctor Johnson), the literary and dramatic world of London was convulsed by the news of the discovery of many important deeds and letters relating to Shakespeare. Malone, in his celebrated edition of the poet, published five years before, had introduced to the public much fresh material (of more or less proved authenticity) relative to the great genius, and the insatiable public, still hungry, was craving for more. It had been hitherto supposed that the fatal fire at the Globe Theatre (the poet's summer theatre in Southwark) had destroyed most of the manuscripts of his plays, and that all that was then left relating to the Swan of Avon had been swallowed up by the ruthless fire at Warwick, that burnt down the house of Doctor Hall, the husband of Susannah,

Shakespeare's favourite daughter. The joy and exultation were therefore all the greater; and in spite of the unaccountable incredulity of such great authorities as Malone, Steevens, and Isaac Reed, the eagerness to see and read the drift from the ocean of oblivion was extreme.

The lucky finder was S. W. H. Ireland, a clever young lawyer's clerk in New Inn, only eighteen years of age, the son of a Mr. S. Ireland, originally a Spitalfields weaver, who had turned seller of curiosities and writer of illustrated tours. He had, it appeared, met at a coffee-house a country gentleman, who, finding him curious in autographs, had taken him to his chambers, and given him leave to rummage over a heap of old deeds and papers, which had descended to him from his father, a lawyer who had retired on a fortune. The first lucky dive into the lumber-room brought up a pearl indeed, no less, in fact, than a lease from Shakespeare and John Heminge to Michael Fraser and Elizabeth his wife. The old curiosity seller, who had two years before travelled through Warwickshire, and had just published that tour, was in raptures, feeling sure there were more Shakespearian papers wherever that lease came from. He was right, there were dozens more. The young clerk had, indeed, struck what the miners call "a champion lode." The next find was a Profession of Faith by Shakespeare, Protestant to the last degree, and quite exploding the foolish tradition that he had died a Roman Catholic; next came a most charming good-natured letter of the great poet to Richard Cowley, the player, with a portrait in pen and ink of "the Bard" himself enclosed. After that appeared a note of hand and receipt from Heminge. Then followed a delightful love-letter from Shakespeare to Ann Hathaway, with some inestimable verses, and a priceless braided lock of his hair.

On being pressed by his father, the young clerk owned that a Mr. Talbot, then a clerk also in New Inn, since that an actor at the Dublin Theatre, had first introduced him to Mr. H., the gentleman who possessed the papers. The coffee-house story had been a mere playful fiction. After ransacking the closet several days, the two keen-eyed clerks had been lucky enough to discover a deed which secured to the owner of the deeds landed property, his title to which had previously been unknown. In gratitude for this, Mr. H. had given Talbot and Ireland all papers

and documents they should be lucky enough to find relating to Shakespeare. Mr. Talbot being written to by Ireland, senior, bore testimony to the truth of these curious facts, and explained with delightful frankness and candour the real reason why Mr. H. had so carefully concealed his name and address. Mr. H. was, it appeared, "a man somewhat known in the world and in the walk of high life." Shy and proud, he did not wish it known that an ancestor of his had been a brother actor with Shakespeare, who in a deed of gift still existing, and lately found, had left him all the furniture of a certain upper room in New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon, together with cups, a miniature of himself, also preserved, and various papers, the majority of which, alas! had been lost. The old curiosity seller was in raptures. Providence had thus permitted him to be the father of a lad who had discovered more Shakespearian papers than had ever yet been found. The mine seemed, indeed, inexhaustible as the faith of an antiquary. Soon there appeared a remarkable letter from Queen Elizabeth, requesting Shakespeare to come with his actors to Hampton and play before "my Lord Leicester," and to this most remarkable document was appended a loyal memorandum in the hand of Shakespeare.

After that the young diver brought home to Norfolk-street engraved portraits of Bassanio and Shylock, that had belonged to Shakespeare. But at this point these astounding disclosures assumed a still more interesting aspect. Considering everything, it was almost touching to think that this young zealot lover of Shakespeare should have struck a path that at last led him to traces of his own ancestors. Working among clouds of dust, he emerged one day dirty as a scavenger, but smiling, with a deed of gift of certain property in Blackfriars, from Shakespeare to a person named Ireland, who had saved him from drowning, a view of Ireland's house and coat-of-arms, and a greater treasure still, some tributary lines to W. H. from W. S., not strong verses, but still not more diluted than the occasion that produced them seemed to have warranted. After that the digger in this Golconda discovered agreements between Shakespeare and John Lowin and Henry Condell, the players, and manuscript notes in about fifty books. All that the world had been longing for, for a hundred and fifty years or so, seemed to pour from the cornucopia in shy Mr. H.'s lumber-closet.

In dust and grime the good fairy had hidden away and guarded the treasure, but the daring lawyer's clerk had at last blown his own trumpet and dissolved the enchantment. At last a corrected manuscript of King Lear was found, free from all the ribaldry foisted in by players and printers. The diver next fished up from "the slimy bottom of the deep" a few leaves of Hamlet, and still more glorious to relate, a play, a real unpublished play, founded, like Cymbeline, on fabulous ancient British history, and entitled Vortigern. There were also found a few leaves of a play entitled Henry the Second, and a deed alluding to a lost play of Shakespeare's, entitled Henry the Seventh.

In a state of almost hysterical rapture the old curiosity seller proceeded to publish the great Shakespearian find. The dreams of so many men had to him become a reality. It is true the keystone of the evidence was imperfect till shy Mr. H. should come forward; but this very break in the case freed his mind of all suspicion of fraud, for it was evident to the meanest understanding that no practised forgers would have left that part of their plot imperfect. The number and variety of papers removed all possibility that any one forger could have produced them. The chuckling old gentlemen therefore instantly constituted a committee of twenty-one literary men, including one or two noblemen, Doctor Parr, the great Whig divine, the celebrated Boswell, Pinkerton, Pyc, the laureate, Valpy of Reading, the Reverend Nathaniel Thornbury (grandfather of an author of the present day), and other celebrities of the day, to inspect the documents. The committee met three times, at No. 8, Norfolk-street, where the papers had been found, and each time the members were more rapturous than the last. At the first meeting, February, 1795, Boswell (who died in April, 1796), full of the new wonder, and as usual outdoing every one in his foolish admiration, previous to signing with the rest a certificate recording his belief, fell upon his knees, and in a tone of submission and exultation, vociferously thanked God that he had lived to witness the astounding discovery, and protested his readiness after that to depart in peace. Doctor Parr and Doctor Warton having heard Shakespeare's Profession of Faith read, exclaimed: "Mr. Ireland, we have very fine things in our church service, and our litany abounds with boasts, but here is a man has distanced us all."

At the next meeting, stammering, arrogant Doctor Parr declared, with his usual energy, that Mr. Boswell's certificate was far too feebly expressed for the importance of the subject, and at once dictated another, which he himself first signed. In March, 1796, another certificate was signed by twelve literary men, to testify that the Shakespearian deeds had been compared with Shakespeare's three signatures to his will, and to a deed in the hands of Mr. Albany Wallis, of 21, Norfolk-street, Garrick's executor, and that they all believed in their authenticity. In January of this year, young Ireland had drawn up a tempting schedule, in presence of Mr. Chalmers and another gentleman, of Shakespearian documents, which he solemnly protested he had seen. They were enough to make a bibliographer commit felony, and an antiquary break twice ten commandments. The list included the manuscripts of Richard the Second, Henry the Second (an unpublished early play) Henry the Fifth, sixty-two leaves of King John, forty-nine leaves of Othello, thirty-seven leaves of Richard the Third, thirty-seven leaves of Timon of Athens, fourteen leaves of Henry the Fourth, seven leaves of Julius Caesar, a catalogue of Shakespeare's books in his own manuscript, a deed of partnership in the Curtain Theatre, two drawings of the Globe Theatre, verses to Queen Elizabeth (only think!) verses to Sir Francis Drake (better still!), verses to Sir Walter Raleigh (best of all!), and his own miniature set in silver—silver! it ought to have been enormous diamonds! Other treasures Ireland had heard of, but had not yet seen. There were also a Chaucer with manuscript notes, a book about Queen Elizabeth with ditto (all Golconda would not buy it), Euphuus with ditto, Bible with ditto (stupendous!), Boccace's works with ditto, Barclay's Ship of Fools (ah, indeed!) with ditto, Hollinshed's Chronicles with ditto (as we all expected); to crown this, discovery of discoveries, a whole length portrait (said to be of the Bard) in oil (said, why of course it was his, and hundreds of eager hands full of gold were stretching ready for it!), but better, grander still, a brief autobiography of Shakespeare in his own hand.

As the malice of Malone and the other opponents of the Ireland party continued still, however, strangely enough, to develop, and as Malone was said to have boasted that he had discovered the papers to be all forgeries, and was about to publish a conclusive work examining the whole evidence,

young Ireland, with very manly and chivalrous feeling, wished to publicly exculpate his father from all share in the great discovery. He drew up, therefore, a formal deposition to that effect on stamped paper, intending to swear it before a magistrate. This was a lawyer's clerk's natural way of proving a thing, but Mr. Albany Wallis, as a friend and a lawyer, disliking a formal deposition, drew up instead an advertisement, which was inserted, after the failure of Vortigern, in the True Briton, the Morning Herald, and other papers. It was signed S. W. H. Ireland, legally witnessed, and began thus:

"In justice to my father, and to remove the reproach under which he has innocently fallen respecting the papers published by him as the manuscripts of Shakespeare, I do hereby solemnly declare that they were given to him by me as the genuine productions of Shakespeare, and that he was and is at this moment totally unacquainted with the source from whence they came."

In April, 1796, Mr. Talbot wrote from Dublin, offering to join in an affidavit of the elder Ireland's innocence of any forgery, the secret "being only known to Sam, myself, and a third person, whom Mr. Ireland is not acquainted with." Mr. Talbot, in the same letter (thirteen days after the failure of Vortigern), protested against the younger Ireland's proposal of disclosing the secret to two gentlemen of respectability. "It would not be," he said, "consistent with our promise and oath." In the same month, nevertheless, Ireland, after much difficulty about selecting his confidants, chose Mr. Albany Wallis as the depositary of the mystery, so that Mr. Wallis might, as a professional man, assure Mr. H. that no part of his property would be damaged by the disclosure. The elder Ireland used reiterated importunities and most anxious solicitations, but Mr. Wallis kept close as a Freemason, his only reply was: "Do not ask me any questions. It is not proper that you should know the secret. Keep your mind easy, all will be well in time."

In the mean while all went bravely for the enterprising clerk only nineteen years old. Indeed, there was quite a competition among the London managers for Vortigern. Sheridan, who was a very lukewarm admirer of Shakespeare, and Harris, were both competitors for it. They neither of them cared a button probably whether the play was genuine or not; all they knew was that the town was wild to see it acted, and the cash

result must be gratifying. As for Kemble, who was a student of old plays, he was very gloomy and silent about Vortigern, and refused, in spite of young Ireland's request, to make any alterations whether he deemed them necessary or not. Porson had also seen the manuscripts, and refused to sign the Articles of Faith; Malone's strong disbelief no doubt influencing him. Nevertheless, Sheridan boldly made an agreement with Ireland to pay him down three hundred pounds, and after deducting the expenses of the theatre, to share the profits with him for sixty nights. That awful poet, Sir James Bland Burgess, wrote the prologue. On the 2nd of April, 1796, the rush of Shakespearians was so tremendous that not more than two or three women could force their way into the Drury Lane pit. It must be confessed, however, with all due deference to the Swan, that the play, on nearer acquaintance, was by no means equal to *Cymbeline*.

John Kemble, Bensley, Charles Kemble, King, Mrs. Powell, and Mrs. Jordan, did their best, but it was from the first too evidently an up-hill game. Vortigern murdered Constantius, became King of Britain, invited over the Saxons, defeated the Scots, fell in love with Rowena, and was fairly on his way to his last place of refuge in Cæsar's Tower after Rowena had poisoned herself, when the public would not have it—not another crumb of it—though there were yards more of flatulent blank verse to spout, and Aurelius had still to fight the hateful Vortigern, knock him down, take his crown, and spare his life. At the perhaps rather unfortunate line,

And when this solemn mockery is o'er,

which Kemble, being interrupted by a wolfish howl of vexation, contempt, and disappointment, somewhat maliciously repeated twice over, the house rose, and in a Niagara of indignation, swept the very early play of Shakespeare into everlasting forgetfulness. Immediately after this lamentable failure, when the Ireland family had shrunk from the theatre hot, astonished, and angry, dozens of critics detected in Vortigern plagiarisms from Shakespeare, and one keen eye found an allusion to "Bishop Bonner," which, to say the least, was a ridiculous anachronism. But the popular verdict did not shake the belief of Ireland's more generous friends, for Chalmers soon after published a defence eleven hundred pages long, and Ireland père wrote a vindication of his own conduct in an angry and contemptuous reply to that

"usurper," "dictator," and presumptuous, arrogant critic, Malone. Unfortunately the very month the father's pamphlet appeared, one written by the son was also printed by Debrett (opposite Burlington House, Piccadilly), acknowledging, with shameless frankness, every one of the extraordinary Shakespearian papers of the imaginary Mr. H. to be mere forgeries of his own.

Young Ireland had been well educated (according to his own account, at Kensington, Ealing, and Soho-square schools, afterwards at Amiens, and a college at Ems, in Normandy, and at sixteen had been articled to a lawyer of eminence in New Inn). The mistaken and vain lad, fond of books and accustomed to old plays, one day took it into his head that if he could pass off some documents of his own writing for Shakespeare's, it would secure him a reputation, delight his father, and show how easily credulous antiquaries could be gulled. Macpherson had led to Chatterton, Chatterton led to Ireland. Purchasing a thin quarto tract of the time of Elizabeth, with her arms on the cover, the lawyer's clerk, eager for this spurious kind of fame, wrote a letter in Elizabethan hand, supposed to be a letter presenting the book to the queen. This letter his father at once pronounced to be genuine. That very day, on his way home, Ireland called on a bookbinder named Laurie, in New Inn-passage, and showing him the letter, told him the story. A young man in the shop then showed him how to make ink look old, by mixing it with some acid and a liquid used in marbling book-covers, and afterwards turning it brown at the fire. In the next long vacation a visit to Stratford-upon-Avon further inflamed the young forger's mind, for at Clapton House the owner told him that a few weeks before, in clearing out a lumber-room to serve as an aviary for young partridges, he had found a whole basketful of old letters and papers, rotten as tinder, but many of them bearing the signature of Shakespeare, which he had burnt as mere litter and rubbish. On Ireland's return to New Inn, being left alone in chambers, he carried his impostures further, at first for mere frolic, keeping by him copies of the poet's signature from Stevens's Shakespeare. The wording of the sham deeds he took from an old Jacobean law paper. Here he had resolved to stop, but his first lies dragged him further down. His father insisted that he knew of more treasures, so did his dupes, and his own vanity and secretiveness urged him on. The paper he first used consisted of blank sheets torn from old books, but after

a time, hearing the jug spoken of as the prevalent Elizabethan water-mark, he selected sheets bearing that mark. Most of the old paper he purchased of Verey, a bookseller in Great May's-buildings, Saint Martin's-lane. Talbot became Ireland's accomplice, the forger tells us, by mere accident. He was also a clerk in New Inn, but at another lawyer's, and his articles had just expired. He had often seen Ireland imitate old handwritings, and at once told him that the first Shakespearian deed was not original. Ireland firmly denied the charge, but unfortunately, a few days after, Talbot, always on the watch, stole in and caught him writing a sham Shakespearian document. No longer able to deny the fact, Ireland forced him to secrecy, fearing the anger of his father, and Talbot, entering into the scheme, promised never to betray him. Not knowing of any extant autograph of Lord Southampton, Ireland invented a style, and wrote the earl's sham letter with his left hand. The praise lavished on his Profession of Faith by Parr and Warton first began to make him think he had original talent, and might carry the imposture further. Queen Elizabeth's letter Ireland wrote from her signature only, and this he copied from an original in the library at Norfolk-street. The drawings of Shylock and Bassanio were bought at a broker's in Butcher-row, and at New Inn, with water colours, he painted in the letters W. S., and the arms of Shakespear, and gave the old Dutchman, whom he christened Shylock, his appropriate knife and scales. No one observed, however, that Ireland had made the spear in the coat of arms point the wrong way. Growing rapidly more daring, he next wrote alterations to King Lear, and he forged the playhouse receipts, which he tied round with threads unravelled from old tapestry. He now flew at higher game, and began to write, in detached portions, his play of Vortigern, pretending that the mysterious Mr. H. would not deliver the original manuscript till Ireland had transcribed the whole work. To his delight his dupes swallowed the whole two thousand lines, declaring they were superior to the worst of Shakespear's plays, and much inferior to his best. For every separate forgery, Ireland had some artful motive. The Profession of Faith was intended to please all true Protestants; the corrections to Lear to show that the impurities of Shakespear's plays were mere interpolations; the theatrical accounts were to prove the Swan's business habits; the story of Ireland saving the Bard from

drowning was to establish a claim to the papers, which he said Mr. H. assured him had belonged to one of his ancestors. So he went on piling lie upon lie. All this time this artful young impostor purposely appeared frequently in public, in order to induce the world to think him a giddy, thoughtless adolescent, incapable of producing such poems. Talbot, after much hesitation, consented to remain an accomplice and sort of sleeping partner in the fraud, and, by his letters to old Ireland, he helped on the scheme. It now became necessary, from time to time, to concoct more documents to strengthen the former evidence, and to win fresh praise from the still hungry literati. Still slowly but surely the time came when the lies could no longer live. The credulous father, urged by foolish dupes, determined that the world should no longer be deprived of such a treasure. He would publish the newly-found Shakespearian papers in spite of all the entreaties of his alarmed son. Vortigern appeared, Malone's crushing—no, that is not the word—pulverising exposure followed, and the imposture crumbled to pieces. The son (with some good in him) began to be seriously uneasy when the world commenced to dub his father an accomplice. Urged by his father, and pressed by the committee, young Ireland was at last compelled to tell Mr. Wallis the whole secret, and to beg him to be silent. At last, driven hopelessly into a corner, the clever young scamp, still vain of his triumph, while his father's vindication of himself and his reply to Malone were actually in the press, November, 1796, issued his Authentic Account of the Shakespearian Manuscripts, and, without waiting for Talbot's consent, as he had solemnly promised, at once avowed his imposture.

"I am myself," he wrote, "both the author and writer, and have had no aid or assistance from any soul living, and I never should have gone so far, but that the world praised the papers so much, and thereby flattered my vanity." And he concluded his pamphlet in the following manner:

"Here then I conclude, most sincerely regretting any offence I may have given the world or any particular individual, trusting at the same time they will deem the whole the act of a boy without any evil or bad intention, but hurried on, thoughtless of any danger that awaited to ensnare him. Should I attempt another play or any other stage performance, I shall hope the public will lay aside all prejudice my conduct may

have deserved, and grant me that kind indulgence which is the certain inmate of every Englishman's bosom."

The impudent imposture had continued for upwards of a year. The elder Ireland died five years afterwards, his end, as was generally supposed, hastened by shame and mortification at his son's forgeries. The son did not produce his promised *Henry the Seventh*, his interlude of the *Virgin Queen*, or his windy *William the Conqueror*, but afterwards published a novel and some rhapsodical and worthless poems, became editor of the *York Herald*, and died in 1835. That such poor forgeries as Ireland's should have required Malono's closely reasoned four hundred and twenty-four pages to expose them, does not say much, it must be confessed, for the knowledge of Elizabethan literature possessed by the contemporaries of Farmer, Steevens, and Isaac Reed.

It will now probably never be ascertained whether the father was an accomplice before or after the fact; but we are, nevertheless, by no means certain that he can be altogether acquitted. His Hogarthian memoranda were in too many cases proved to be spurious.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LXVI. HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF FALCONBURY.

In this pleasant green shade they had come to a standstill.

"Pretty creature," said this lady, in very sweet tones, "you are looking for somebody, I think. You have not been long here; I have not seen your face before. First, tell me who it is you want; I may be able to help you."

"Thank you very much; I have been looking everywhere for Lady Mardykes, and no one seems to know where she is."

"Oh! Lady Mardykes? You'll find her time enough. You are very young, dear; Lady Mardykes is a charming companion. But if you knew as much as I do of this curious world, you would hardly be in such a hurry to find her; you would wait with a great deal of patience until she found you."

The young lady looked in the face of her new acquaintance, who spoke so oddly of her hostess. That unknown friend laughed musically and softly, and looked very archly from the corners of her eyes, and nodded a little more gravely, as if to say, "Although I laugh I mean it seriously."

What she did say in continuation, was this:

"Come through this arch; there is a seat here that commands a very good view of the croquet-ground and the open walks. And what is your name, child?" she continued, as they walked side by side; "you are sweetly pretty; but by no means so pretty as I."

This little qualification Maud, of course, accepted as a pleasantry, which yet might be quite true, for this lady, although by no means so young as she, was extremely pretty.

"You, now, begin by telling me who you are," said this lady, taking her place on the rustic seat, to which she had led the way, and pointing with her parasol to Maud, invited her to sit down also, "and then you shall hear everything about me."

"My name," said Maud, "is Vernon, my mamma is Lady Vernon; we live at Roydon, a little more than forty miles from this."

"Indeed! Lady Vernon, of Roydon? We ought to know one another then. I knew your mamma at one time, when I was a very young girl; it is twelve years ago. You have heard her speak of me, the Duchess of Falconbury. My greatest misfortune overtook me very early."

She turned away, and sighed deeply.

Maud had heard of that lady's bereavement. It had been a marriage of love. The young duke died in the second year of what promised to be a perfectly happy union, and the beautiful dowager had refused to listen to any solicitations to change her widowed state ever since.

"I like your face, I love your voice, which, for me, has a greater charm than even the features," said the duchess. And she placed her hand on Maud's as it lay upon the seat, and looked for a moment earnestly in her face. "Yes, we shall be very good friends; I can trust you; I ought to trust you, for, otherwise, I cannot warn you."

"Warn me?" repeated Maud.

"Yes, warn you. I see you looking round again for Lady Mardykes."

"I don't see her anywhere," said Maud.

"So much the better," said the duchess, this time with a little shudder.

Maud looked at her. But her dark look was but the shadow of a passing cloud. The sunshine of her smile immediately succeeded, and was soon darkened again.

"For five years a miserable secret has lain heavy at my heart; I breathed it but once, and then to a person who visited me

under circumstances so strange, that I scarcely know whether he is of this world or of the next. Can you keep a secret? Will you, while you live?" she whispered, drawing nearer to Maud.

I wonder whether priests and physicians, who have so many secrets thrust upon them, in the way of their trade, have any curiosity left for those which fortune may throw in their way? But people who enjoy no such professional obligations and opportunities, have for the most part a large and accommodating appetite for all such mental aliment.

Maud looked for a moment in the pretty face which had so suddenly grown pale and thoughtful, and with hardly a hesitation she accepted the proffered trust.

"You like Lady Mardykes?" asks the duchess.

"Extremely—all I know of her."

"Well said. Well guarded—'all you know of her.' You shall know more of her before you leave me. She is a pretty woman still, but, of course, *passée*. When I knew her first she was beautiful; how beautiful you could not now believe. But always something, to my sense, funeste; a beautiful flower dedicated to death. Yet she seemed the analogy of some exquisite and wonderful flower that grows somewhere in dreamland, in enchanted gardens, where you will, but always in shade, never in light. Her face was beautiful, gentle, melancholy, but, to my eye, baleful. I should have liked to have held my parasol between it and me. Do you understand that feeling? Those flowers are associated in my mind with a poison that blasts the very air."

"An odd guest," thought Maud, "to speak so of her entertainer."

"You think it strange," said the duchess, oddly echoing Maud's thoughts, "that I should speak so of Lady Mardykes. You shall hear and judge."

This lady spoke, I may parenthetically mention, in a particularly low, sweet voice, and with a curious fluency, which, if one had only heard without seeing her, would have led one to suppose that she was reading a written composition rather than talking in colloquial English. She continued thus:

"You know her. She is very winning and gentle; she is, or was, one of the most fascinating persons I ever met. She is radiant with the beauty of candour. Her expression is soft and quite angelic; and she, among all living women, possesses the blackest heart and is capable of the most enormous crimes."

As she murmured these words, the lady,

with a dismal gaze in her face, pressed her hand on Maud's wrist.

"You can't believe that I am serious," said the duchess. "I'll convince you. You think it odd I should know her and meet her. I'll convince you in a way you little expect. The days of detection are marked in this little red book. No one reads it but myself, and that only for a date." She showed a little book about two inches square, bound in scarlet leather. "I'm talking to you in an unknown tongue; you will understand me perfectly another time," she continued, a little embarrassed. "I'll tell you at present enough to justify what I have said of her. I am fettered and she is fettered. You cannot yet understand that; and, as sometimes happens, from the first moment we met there was a mutual embarrassment, that is, mutual fear and dislike; even more, mutual horror and antipathy, the reasons of which depend on— Well, by-and-bye I may speak of it again; but for the present we let that pass. There is the cause of my permitting her to live, and of her permitting me to live. Those are strong terms, but true. Listen. I make no half-confidences. She liked my dear husband before his marriage. Gentle and soft as she looks, she is an ambitious and daring woman. He suspected nothing of it. She loved him passionately, and in proportion as jealousy began to infuse itself into it, that passion became atrocious. Here is the secret. Sit closer to me. My husband died by the hand of a poisoner; and that hand was afterwards directed against my life."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Maud, feeling as if she were still in a horrible dream.

"Hush! Dear child, it is of the last importance that no human being should suspect that I have imparted a secret to you. Your life would be practised upon immediately, and the ultimate vindication of justice be defeated. You shall know, by-and-bye, the curious circumstances which, for a time, prevent the sword from descending upon Lady Mardykes, and which, although she knows that a movement of my finger may bring it down, yet compel her to tolerate my existence, and constrain both to live on mutual terms of exterior friendliness. Do you see that man coming toward us?"

"Doctor Antomarchi?" said Maud.

CHAPTER LXVII. MAUD CHANGES HER ROOMS.

DOCTOR ANTOMARCHI was walking slowly in that direction, with his eye upon them.

"I see you know him. He is a very

particular friend, and has been for many years, of Lady Mardykes. I never smell any perfume, no, not even a flower, that he presents. You will do wisely to follow my example. Lady Mardykes chooses her instruments astutely. See how he watches us. Let us get up; he will think, if we seem so absorbed, that we are talking of that which—might not please him."

The duchess rose as she spoke, and Maud with her.

Could Maud Vernon credit one particle of the shocking melodrama she had just been listening to? One thing was certain: her new friend had not been mystifying her. Her colour came and went as she told her story, and the expression was too genuinely that of a person pursued by an agitating and horrible recollection to be counterfeited.

"You can't believe all this?" resumed the duchess. "I shall be here for a walk at eleven in the morning; meet me, and we shall have another talk. Till then, upon this subject we are mute."

Antomarchi was now near. To the duchess he made a very ceremonious bow, and one not quite so profound to Miss Vernon.

"Oh, Doctor Antomarchi," said the duchess, loftily, drawing up, "can you tell us where Lady Mardykes is? Miss Vernon has been looking for her."

"I believe, your grace, she is not likely to see her this evening; Lady Mardykes has been called away. But she will certainly be here again in the morning."

Doctor Antomarchi had to address the conclusion of this speech to Maud only, for the Duchess of Falconbury turned her head away with an air of scarcely concealed disdain, which implied very pointedly how exclusively in the interest of her companion her inquiry respecting Lady Mardykes had been made.

"And can you tell me," said Maud, "whether Miss Medwyn has arrived, or how soon she is expected?"

"I know that Miss Medwyn has not come; I do not know when she may come; but certainly she is not expected to-day," he answered. "I think, Miss Vernon, I need scarcely ask you whether you feel a good deal knocked up to-day?"

"I am a little tired."

"And a little nervous?"

"I slept so little last night, and went to bed rather tired, and I really do think there is nothing else."

"Well, you must consent to remain perfectly quiet, for the remainder of the after-

noon, and get to bed before ten to-night, and to-morrow you will be quite yourself. You are more tired, and your nerves more shaken, than you suppose. You may bring on an attack of illness else."

"But if Lady Mardykes should come to-night I should like so much to be ready to go down."

"She will not be here to-night, assure yourself of that. Or I'll put it, if you please, in a way you may like better. If she does come to-night I undertake that she will certainly pay you a visit in your room, the very first thing she does."

"That is very good of Doctor Antomarchi," said the duchess, with a satirical smile on her lips, and irony in her tone. "I shall be going out for a drive after luncheon, so I suppose, dear, I shan't see you, unless Doctor Antomarchi should give leave, again to-day, but to-morrow we shall meet, and I think till then I shall say good-bye."

She nodded prettily to Maud, and smiled lingeringly over her shoulder as she turned away and re-entered the shady walk from which they had lately emerged together.

Doctor Antomarchi, although not included in the lady's leave-taking, took off his hat with another ceremonious bow, and at the same moment a servant stationed on the terrace began to ring a bell.

"That is the luncheon-bell," said the doctor.

The polite company assembled on the croquet-ground threw down their mallets at sound of it, and they and all the loiterers on the walks, and among the flowers, began to troop toward the door through which she had entered, and in a very short time this pretty quadrangle was nearly emptied, while, more slowly, Doctor Antomarchi walking by her side, they two moved in the same direction.

Maud did feel a little, indeed a good deal, tired, and this, together with the dispiriting absence of her hostess, and the agitating stories, false she was certain, communicated by her fanciful new friend, the duchess, predisposed her to adopt Antomarchi's advice.

Maud found Mercy Creswell awaiting her in the passage. She ducked a little curtsy, with a face of awe, to Doctor Antomarchi as he passed her; and then told her young mistress that "she had been moved to much more beautifuller rooms."

On reaching them, under Mercy Creswell's guidance, she found that they were next the suite which she had occupied

on the night before, but at the near side of that strong door which seemed to form a very marked boundary in the house.

They consisted of four rooms, a bedroom, a dressing-room adjoining it, and a sitting-room beyond that; there was also a narrow room for her maid, with a door of communication with the young lady's room, and another opening on the passage.

Nothing could have been devised more charming than the taste in which the rooms, intended for Miss Vernon's use, were furnished and got up. If they had been prepared by some wealthy vassal for the reception of a royal visitor, they could not have been more elegant, and even magnificent. Who could have fancied that these bare, gloomy corridors led to anything so gorgeous and refined? Maud looked round, smiling with surprise and pleasure.

"They was only finished this morning, miss," said Mercy, also turning round slowly, with a fat smile of complacency, for she participated in the distinction.

"Was all this done for me?" Maud inquired at last.

"Every bit, miss," rejoined her maid.

"How extremely kind! What taste! What beautiful combinations of colour!"

Maud ran on in inexhaustible admiration for some time, examining now, bit by bit, the details of her sitting-room.

"Lady Mardykes will be here to-morrow morning," said Maud, at last; "it really will be a relief to me to thank her. I hardly know what to say."

Her eloquence was interrupted by the arrival of luncheon, served on beautiful china and silver.

When she had had her luncheon, she began to question Mercy about the people whom she had seen in the croquet-ground under the windows.

"Do you know the appearance of the Spanish minister?" she asked.

"Spanish ambassador? Oh! La, yes, miss. Don Fernando Tights they calls him in the servants' hall."

"What kind of person is he?"

"Well, he's a quiet creature; there's no harm in him, only, they say, he is woundy proud."

"That is pretty plain. And the Duchess of Falconbury? She was talking to me a good deal of Lady Mardykes. Are they good friends?"

"Oh! bless you, that's a troublesome one. Never a good word for no one has she. I would not advise no one that's here to make a companion of that lass; she has got many a light head into trouble, not

that there's nothing dangerous about her, only this, that she is always a-trying to make mischief."

"That is a good deal, however. Do you mean that she tells untruths?"

"Well, no; I do believe she really half thinks what she says, but her head is always running on mischief, and that's the sort she is."

"How do you mean that she has got people into trouble?"

"Well, I mean by putting mischievous thoughts in their heads, you see, and breeding doubt and ill-will."

"Do you recollect any particular thing she said, of that kind?" asked Maud, curiously.

"Not I, miss. Ho! bless you, miss, she'd talk faster than the river runs, or the mill turns. That's the sort she is with her airs and her grandeur, fit to burst with pride."

Miss Vernon was pleased at this testimony to the dubious nature of this great lady's scandal. A mist, however, not quite comfortable, still remained. She wished very much that she had never heard her stories.

Maud had still a slight flicker of her nervous headache, and was really tired besides, and not sorry of an excuse to spend the rest of the day quietly with her pleasant books and music, for a piano had been placed in her sitting-room, now and then relieved by so much of Mercy Creswell's gossip as she cared to call for, and, in this way, before she was well aware, the curtain of night descended upon her first day.

CHAPTER LXVIII. THE THIEF.

It was past nine o'clock next morning, notwithstanding her resolution to be up and stirring early, when Maud got up:

Lady Mardykes was expected, as we know, to arrive that morning; and Maud peeped often from the window, as she sat at her dressing-table near it.

In her dressing-gown and slippers, she went into the sitting-room on hearing the maid arrive with her breakfast things.

"Can you tell me," asked Maud, "whether Lady Mardykes has arrived?"

"Please 'm, is that the lady that is coming from——"

"No matter where she's coming from," interrupted Mercy Creswell, sharply; "it is Lady Mardykes, the lady that came yesterday, and is expected again this morning. She's a new servant, not a week in the house," says the femme de chambre to

Maud, in a hasty aside. "I think you might know whether her ladyship's arrived or no," and she darted at the maid a look black as thunder.

"Yes'm, I'm quite new here, please. I don't half know the ways of the 'ouse yet. I was 'ired by——"

"Don't you mind who you was 'ired by. I'll make out all about it, miss, myself, if you please, just now," again interposed Mercy.

And before she had time to reflect upon this odd dialogue between the maids, Miss Vernon's attention was pleasantly engaged by satisfactory evidence on the subject of her inquiry, for she saw Lady Mardykes enter the now quiet croquet-ground from the further side, in company with Antomarchi. Except for these two figures the large quadrangle was deserted.

Antomarchi was speaking earnestly to her; she was looking down upon the walk. The distance was too great to read faces at; but Maud saw Lady Mardykes apply her handkerchief once or twice to her eyes. She was evidently weeping.

Her father had not died. Her dress was as brilliant as good taste would allow, and the morning paper said that there were no longer any grounds for uneasiness about him. Had Maud's eye accidentally lighted on a scene? Was this strange, and as she thought, repulsive man, urging his suit upon this lady over whom he had succeeded, possibly, in establishing a mysterious influence?

Lady Mardykes glanced up suddenly towards this long line of windows, as if suddenly recollecting that she may be observed.

Then she walked with more of her accustomed air; and she and Antomarchi crossing the grass-plot, ascended the broad flight of steps that scale the terrace, at its middle point, exactly opposite to the door in the side of the house, nearly under Maud's window. Through this door they entered the house, and Miss Vernon, for the present, lost sight of them.

On the breakfast table lay the Morning Post, where, among other interesting pieces of news, she read: "Lady Mardykes is at present entertaining a distinguished circle of friends at Carsbrook;" and then followed a selection from the names. Her interest more than revived as she read this long list of names, containing so much that was distinguished. There was one omission. The Honourable Charles Marston did not figure with other honourables in the list. But that list was but a selection,

and Charles Marston had not yet made his mark in the world, and might easily be omitted, and be at Carsbrook, notwithstanding.

She would not ask Mercy Creswell; for she did not choose Lady Vernon to hear anything that might awake her suspicions. And that reserved and prevaricating femme de chambre had written, she knew, the day before, to Lady Vernon, and considered herself as in her employment, and not in Maud's. It behoved her, therefore, to be very much on her guard in talking to that person.

Maud never found Mercy Creswell so slow and clumsy in assisting at her toilet as this morning. There was very little to be done to equip her for her ramble in the croquet-ground; but that little was retarded by so many blunders, that Maud first laughed, and then stared and wondered.

She saw Mercy Creswell frequently look at her big watch, and not until after she had successfully repeated it pretty often, did she perceive that this sly young woman was pointing out to her in the quadrangle below, which was now beginning to fill, persons, and little incidents in succession, which tempted her again and again to look from the window, and delayed her. All this time the femme de chambre, affecting to laugh with her young mistress, and to be highly interested in the doings of the croquet-ground, was plainly thinking with some anxiety of something totally different, and watching the lapse of the minutes whenever she thought she could, unobserved, consult her watch.

Maud looking in the glass, saw her do this, with an anxious face, and then hold it to her ear, doubtful if it were going, time seemed, I suppose, to creep so slowly.

Why was it that this maid, this agent of her mother's, seemed always occupied about something different from what she pretended to be about, and to have always something to conceal?

Another delay arose about the young lady's boots. Her maid had put them out of her hand, she could not for the life of her remember where.

"It seems to me, Mercy, you have made up your mind not to let me out until your watch says I may go; so unless you find them in a minute more, I shall walk out in my slippers."

As the young lady half in jest said this, the great clock of the old house, which is fixed in that side of it that overlooks the croquet-ground, struck eleven. And the clang of its bell seemed to act like

magic upon Mercy Creswell, for she instantly found the boots, and in a minute or two more had done all that was required of her, and her young mistress went out, full of excited expectation, and not a little curious to observe more closely the odd relations of confidence and sympathy which seemed to have established themselves between the wealthy lady of Carsbrook and the clever foreign adventurer who had, she fancied, marked her for his own.

The gallery that passes her door is a very long one, and exactly as she entered it from her dressing-room, there emerged from a side-door near the further extremity, to her great surprise, two persons, whom she saw to be Lady Mardykes and Doctor Antomarchi. The lady stepped out quickly; their way lay toward the head of the stairs. They were in low and earnest conversation, and plainly had not seen her.

Lady Mardykes walked with a quick and agitated step, intending, it seemed, to avoid observation. Had it been otherwise, Maud would have run to overtake her. What was she to think?

She would try to keep Lady Mardykes in sight, and when she got down-stairs there would be no awkwardness in speaking to her.

Lady Mardykes and Antomarchi had but just appeared, and Maud had hardly made two steps toward them from her door, when Mercy Creswell peeped out.

"Lord! There's her ladyship!" gasped the maid in unaccountable consternation, and with a stamp on the floor she called to her young mistress, still in a suppressed voice, as she tried to catch her dress in her hand. "Come back, miss, you must not follow her ladyship. It's as much as my place is worth if you do."

"What on earth do you mean? What *can* you mean?" said Maud, turning towards her for a moment in astonishment. "I'm going down-stairs, I'm going to the croquet-ground. Go back to my room, please, and wait for me there."

The femme de chambre glared on her irresolutely, with her finger-tips to her underlip, and the other hand extended in the attitude in which she had grasped with it at the lady's dress. Suddenly she drew back a step, with a look a little demure and frightened, and dropping a short curtsy, she dived back into the room again.

This woman, to whose care Lady Vernon had consigned her toilet, was becoming more and more unaccountable and unpleasant every day. But there were subjects of curiosity that piqued her too

nearly to allow the image of Mercy Creswell a place in her thoughts just now.

As she moved along the gallery, she saw the door, through which Lady Mardykes and Antomarchi had just passed, open, and a man's head and part of his figure protruded; it was only for a moment while he dropped a black leather bag at the side of the door next the stairs, and then withdrew, closing but not quite shutting the door; but she had no difficulty in recognising the peculiar countenance of Mr. Darkdale.

As she passed she heard a voice she recognised. It was the same she had heard from the carriage that passed them in the pine-wood on the night of her journey, and which, allowing for the hoarseness produced by shouting, so nearly resembled that of Captain Vivian.

"Imprisoned by Lady Mardykes, you know as well as I, I can't get away, no one ever can from this house: I shall never leave this room alive——"

These odd words reached her, and the door was shut, as they were rapidly spoken. It was not the voice of an angry man. It was spoken in a tone of utter despondency. Some people, however, have an exaggerated way of talking; and this was not worth a great deal.

Maud knew her way to the great staircase perfectly now. As she went down she met the Duchess of Falconbury coming up. This great lady was dressed, as usual, in very elegant taste, and looked quite charming. She stopped at the landing where she met Maud.

"So I have found my friend at last. Come to my arms, my long lost swain!" she exclaimed, and smiling placed her arms about her neck and kissed her, before Maud had well time to be even astonished. The duchess laughed a little silvery laugh. "I really began to fear I was never to see you again, and I have so much to tell you. So much *more*," she whispered, "and you don't know what it is to have a confidence to make, and no one with either honour or sympathy to hear it; and that was my sad case, until I met you. I forgot my watch in its case on my dressing-table. I don't mind sending; I go myself. I lock up everything," she said in a still lower whisper, and held up a little ornolu key, and she added significantly, "you had better do so, while you remain here. I used to lose something or other every day till I took that precaution; they steal all my penknives and scissors. Where are you going now?"

"I'm trying to find a friend." (She did

not care to mention Lady Mardykes particularly, as her name might easily set the duchess off upon one of her "hominies," as they call such stories in the north country.) "I think I shall have no difficulty in finding her."

"And then? Where shall I look for you?"

"I suppose I shall go where every one seems to go, here, to the croquet-ground."

"Yes—the croquet-ground, that will do very nicely, and I will meet you there."

She nodded, and smiled over her shoulder as she ran up the stairs, and Maud ran down, in hopes of recovering Lady Mardykes's track, but, for the time, she had effectually lost sight of her.

There was no footman at this moment in the hall near the stairs. The servant who was at the hall-door had not seen her. She had probably taken the way to the croquet-ground, the general muster before luncheon.

She made a wrong turn in threading the long passages, and found herself at the door of the odd, oval room in which her interview with Doctor Antomarchi, on the night of her arrival, had taken place.

The door was a little open. It occurred to her that possibly Lady Mardykes might be there. She tapped at the door. There was no answer; she pushed it more, opened it, and stepped in.

This room had a peculiar character, as I have said. Something sternly official and mysterious. It might be the first audience-chamber, in a series, in the Inquisition. Maud looked about her. She was alone.

On the massive table I have mentioned, near the large desk which stood at one end of it, was spread a square piece of letter-paper, on which were laid, side by side, three trifling toys, of very little collective value, but which at once riveted the attention of Miss Vernon.

She stooped over them; there could be no doubt as to their identity. There was the tiny paper-cutter she had missed, with its one little steel blade in the handle. There were the scissors with the gold mounting of her dressing-case, from which they had been stolen, and there, finally, a little penknife, also stolen from her dressing-case, but which she had not missed. The pretty little penknife had her monogram, M. G. V., upon it. The paper-knife had this, and the device of the Rose and the Key beside; and about the scissors there could be no doubt whatever. If there

had been any it would have been removed by a memorandum written in a clear, masculine hand, upon the sheet of paper on which they lay.

It was simply these words:

Septm. —th, 1864.

Miss Vernon.

Roydon Hall.

See K. L. L., vol iii., folio 378.

Three articles; viz. scissors, paper-cutter, penknife.

Questionable.

"Questionable! What can he mean? Is this a piece of insolence of that foreigner, about whom Lady Mardykes appears infatuated? Questionable? What on earth can he mean or suspect?"

Her first impulse was to seize her own property, and the paper, and bring the whole thing before Lady Mardykes. But her more dignified instincts told her differently. She would leave these stolen trifles where they were, and mention the discovery, perhaps, after consultation with her cousin Maximilla, whom she was sure to see in a day or two.

Maud turned about now, and walked out of the door, almost hoping to meet Doctor Antomarchi. She did not; for he returned through another door, and too late discovered his oversight. But he little suspected that Miss Vernon had herself visited the room, and by a perverse accident had seen and recognised her missing property. He glanced jealously round the room, with eyes that, whenever he was roused, became wild and burning.

"Strange forgetfulness! But nothing has been stirred. That dear Lady Mardykes, she is so excitable! One can't avoid being disturbed."

He shut the door sharply, opened a large cabinet, and popped these trophies of larceny into one of a multitude of pigeon-holes.

"What will Damian say? What will Damian think? He's past the age of thinking against a hard head like this," and he tapped his square forehead with his pencil-case, smiling and musing. 2357.

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A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS, JUN.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 140. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, 1871.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

CHAPTER IV. FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.

THE income which Major Vane derived from his sporting transactions being of a fluctuating character, and the sum regularly transmitted to him by his wife being, as he justly considered, contemptible in amount, that gallant officer was unable to have his permanent home as luxurious, or even as comfortable, as he undeniably wished it to be. Though accustomed to speak of his abode vaguely and generally as his "rooms," the major in reality occupied only one apartment, which was situate at the top of a house, the ground floor of which was a shop of such enormous dimensions, that it not merely absorbed the first and the second floors, but so bulged out at the side as only to leave space for a private door so narrow that it looked like one plank, and for a staircase, which was perfectly ladder-like in the slimness of its proportions. In the fanlight above the narrow door, so narrow as to consist only of one pane of glass, and immediately above the small speck of blue gas that was allowed to issue from the one tiny burner, was posted in the off season a fly-blown, skimpy little bill, inscribed with a legend, setting forth that apartments were to be let "for club gentlemen."

In the off season only, for during the season the "club gentlemen" mustered so strongly as to render the announcement quite unnecessary. Of various kinds were they, and so numerous, that one wondered where they could find space sufficient to stow themselves away. Blue-faced majors of the Bagstock breed, with pendulous

cheeks, and double-breasted coats, and buckskin gloves, occasionally took up their quarters in the "apartments for club gentlemen," which also afforded shelter to an Irish M.P., who was popularly supposed to live upon the produce of the sale of blue-books and printed parliamentary documents for waste paper, and whose tall hat was so extremely shiny, as to cause the parliamentary funny man—like most parliamentary funny men, but a poor joker—to say that O'Dwyer must have forgotten to take his hat off one morning when he greased his hair. There, too, for three weeks, in the very height of the season, sleeping for about two hours out of the twenty-four, was to be found a provincial newspaper reporter, who spent all the money and health which he had gained during the previous eleven months in rushing about from theatre to concert, from dance to drum, from artist's studio to author's library, chatting, note-taking, observing, and gathering together an amount of anecdote and chit-chat, upon the distinction due to the purveyor of which he lived, a courted guest, on his return to his native town.

In the midst of this motley colony, Major Vane was the sole regular tenant. The bedroom which he inhabited, though at the top of the house, was larger, airier, and better furnished than the rest, and he kept it on throughout the year, because, though he was often absent for weeks together, going from race meeting to race meeting, or staying in the country-houses of trainers and jockeys, with certain of whom he was a great favourite, he was always liable to be summoned to London, where he made it a point of having a pied-à-terre. There was a certain recklessness of tone about the whole affair which amused him. He

laughed at the open note, written in a round hand by the landlady, and skewered on to the extinguisher of the Irish member's candlestick, informing that distinguished politician that the cabman, who brought him from the House on the previous wet night, had called twice, and would take out a summons unless the money was left for him in the morning. He grinned as he inspected the highly-scented notes addressed in violet ink and very scrawly writing, which awaited the return of the blue-faced major. He laughed as he stumbled over the enormous high-lows of the provincial newspaper reporter. He did not mind the smell of warm mutton fat, tempered by tobacco, which lingered on the staircase. He did not mind the normal state of blackness in which lived the female slave of the establishment, who printed off impressions of her fingers and thumbs on everything which she could possibly clutch hold of. He would have objected to her very strongly, indeed, and to the black beetles, in whose company she lived, and which, when dead, were in the habit of dropping out of her costume as she moved along; and to her cooking, an art which, judging from the result, she seemed generally to practise contemporaneously with the performance of her toilet and the arrangement of her hair; he would have objected to all this, had he had anything to do with it. But the fact was that Major Vane only slept at his lodgings, and ate, drank, wrote, read, played cards, received visits, and gave his address at his club.

The Craven, to which Major Vane belonged, may best be described as a shady club. It was situated on the shady side of the way, in a shady street, in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly, and the members were all more or less shady, generally more. There were shady majors, and colonels, and captains, some of whom had been in the regular service, which they had quitted in a remarkably shady manner, but most of whom were accredited by, or attached to Indian nawabs, or foreign potentates of the shadowiest as well as the shadiest order. There were shady barristers, whose names were recollected in connexion with the shadiest cases, and shady attorneys who employed them. Such members of the Craven Club as had well-known names, were for the most part the worst of all. Whenever one of those names was mentioned, the question arose, "What have I heard about that man?" and the reflec-

tion was generally certain to bring something forward to the discredit of the gentleman in question.

One noticeable feature of the Craven Club, too, was that though most of its members were seen a great deal in public, driving handsome horses in the park, lounging out of pit-boxes at the opera, and sprawling in stalls at theatres, always expensively dressed in exaggeration of the reigning fashion—no one ever met them in general society. They gave each other elaborate banquets at the club, they were seen during the season at Richmond and Greenwich, entertaining ladies, quietly dressed, and not indecorous in manner, who were equally unknown to the rest of the London world. Sometimes they would make an attempt to assert themselves. The men would get themselves proposed for some established and well-known club, when they would be either black-balled or withdrawn. The women would call upon some ladies whose husbands had been introduced to them; the visit would not be returned, and any further attempt at intercourse with the outer world would for a time be abandoned.

Not that they would be discouraged at these rebuffs. They ignored them as far as possible, and when compelled to accept them, they would shrug their shoulders, and talk of themselves as Bohemians; though between their debased and sensuous lives and the honest, free Bohemianism of literature and art, there was as much resemblance as between their purple whiskers and painted faces and the black locks and bronzed cheeks of the real Romany.

In its external life, at least, the Craven had some resemblance to other clubs; men ate and drank there, and there was a writing-room (the blotting-cases of which, if they could have revealed the secrets confided to them, would have been invaluable to Messrs. Moss and Moss, the attorneys of Thavies Inn, or Serjeant Skinner, the well-known leader in the Divorce Court), and a smoking-room, where many curious little "plants" had been concocted, and a card-room and a billiard-room. The wines and spirits supplied to the members were undeniably good; Dick Wrangham, commonly known as Ringlet Wrangham, took care of that, for after he had sold out of the cavalry and failed as a horse-dealer, some of his friends set him up as the proprietor of the Craven, and out of its profits he earned a very tolerable income.

About noon on the second day after his

return from Wexeter, Major Vane entered the club, and ordered his breakfast. In the coffee-room he found several other members engaged in discussing the same meal; breakfast, however, at the Craven Club, was by no means of the ordinary kind. On the tables was seldom to be seen any tea or coffee, or their usual accompaniments; there was toast, certainly, but it was prepared with anchovy; there were devilled biscuits and cayenned legs of poultry, and artful thirst-provoking preparations of dried fish; and for the allaying of the thirst when provoked, there were cool cups, which on the whole were found to inebriate considerably more than they cheered, and effervescing liquors of all kinds.

Noon was the very earliest period of the day recognised at the Craven Club; the number of members did not admit of more than one staff of servants being kept, and as the habits of its frequenters were undoubtedly late, much alacrity before noon could not be expected of the waiters who had not retired to rest before daybreak. Very filmy-eyed and cloudy-limbed were these domestics in the morning, as they yawned in the bay windows and swept up the fragments of cigar-ash with dirty dusters, and plunged their fingers into flat remains of half-emptied tumblers. The grim old porter, who had an easier time than most of them, as he slept soundly during the latter part of the night in his glazed box, always had a hoar frost of silver beard upon his mottled cheeks, and cursed, and envied while he cursed, the bright freshness of the boy who slapped the newspapers down on the desk before him and laughed in his face. The man who brought the play-bills knew something about sitting up late, and the woman who left the milk knew something about getting up early; but in regard to the number of hours' sleep they had, one might be regarded as Rip Van Winkle, and the other as the Sleeping Beauty, in comparison to this hall-porter. By noon, however, all the establishment was on the alert; the members who lived in lodgings wanted their breakfasts, and the members who lived at home, and who for various reasons did not care to have their correspondence addressed to their private houses, wanted their letters. There was generally great anxiety to see the sporting papers, several copies of which were taken in at the Craven, and there were hazy reminiscences of last night's conversation to adjust, and half-made, half-dreamt of wagers to regulate and settle.

All the men at breakfast looked up as Philip Vane swaggered to the waiter's desk to give his orders, and two or three of them growled out "Good morning." He was a popular man in the club, and had it been dinner time, would have been received with a chorus of acclamation, but the members of the Craven were generally short tempered and reticent in the morning, and thought a nod quite sufficient greeting. Major Vane returned the salutations in his usual careless, insolent way, seated himself at his table, and buried himself in the folds of a sporting newspaper. From the vaticinations of the writer, whose principal merit appeared to be the ingenious manner in which he refrained from mentioning the name of the horse whose merits he was discussing, alluding to it now as the son of its sire, now as the native of the place where it was bred, and now as the property of the person who owned it, Major Vane's attention was distracted by the simultaneous arrival of his breakfast and of a friend.

There were some points of similarity and dissimilarity between them; the breakfast was sound and good, the friend was neither; the breakfast had to be paid for, so generally had the friend. There was a doubt as to whether the breakfast might disagree with one, there was no doubt about the friend's disagreeing with one, if by so doing he saw a chance of bettering his position. Delabole was the friend's name, his status that of gentleman, though twenty years before, when he spent a few happy days with Lieutenant Bird, the governor of Alnwick jail, his name was Munker, his profession horse coping. But Alnwick was a long way off, and Lieutenant Bird had been dead for many years.

A short fat man, Mr. Delabole, with a square head like a tin loaf, no neck to speak of, an enormous chest, always set off by a very open shirt-front, or covered by a waterfall of satin, with one valuable pin in its centre, short awkward legs, and very small hands and feet. The latter, which were flat as well as small, always looked like the feet of the dummies in the tailors' shops; the little fingers of the former were always covered to the knuckles with lustrous rings. Philip Vane saw the rings blazing on his shoulder before he looked round at their owner. Mr. Delabole always put his hands on his friends' shoulders and generally called them "dear boy." He was a large-hearted man, very.

"We wanted you with us last night, dear

boy," were Mr. Delabole's first words, after the interchange of greetings.

"And I wanted you here," said Philip Vane.

There was something in his look which aroused Delabole's attention, for he said, quickly:

"Why, has anything been done?"

"Not much. Bolekoff brought his cousin here, the man from Germany, about whom he is always swaggering."

"I know."

"Well, I played *écarté* with him."

"Well!"

"We played five games, of which he won three."

"Ah! that means nothing, dear boy!" said Mr. Delabole, drawing up his chair and dropping his voice. "You were playing——"

"Foxey!" said Vane, in a whisper, "so was he, foxey to the teeth and eyes, foxey all over! Vine grower at Neuwied, Bolekoff called him, and thought I believed it! No Rhenish grape merchant ever handled his cards like that Viennese, my dear Delabole! As keen a Viennese sharp as ever swaggered in the Prater, or played at the Verein."

Philip Vane's eyes flashed, and his voice grew a little louder as he finished this sentence. Mr. Delabole held up a warning finger, and when he spoke there was no trace of emotion in his tone.

"It is very, very likely, dear boy!" he said, in a fat whisper; "it's just one of Bolekoff's moves! Your Polish Jew, sir," continued Mr. Delabole, shaking his head sententiously, "your Polish Jew is a bad breed!" Then, in quite a different tone, he added, "What did you want me for, dear boy?"

"Merely to know whether I was right as to our friend's style; merely to see whether you agreed with my idea of it."

"No occasion, for my presence for that; trust my Philip for the spot-stroke in such a case! For finding needles very judiciously hidden in bottles of hay, there is not, I believe, your equal."

"You must want something of me very badly indeed, Delabole," said Vane, grimly. "I never heard you so complimentary. Has it anything to do with last night, of which you were speaking?"

"It had nothing to do with anything in the world, dear boy," said Delabole, "certainly not with anything of last night, which was devoted to pleasure, and in which no trace of business intruded."

"Pleasure!" repeated Philip Vane.

"Pleasure, and nothing else," said Delabole. "A delightful little supper given to Lotty Lopez, and a few of her female friends."

"Ah!" said Philip Vane, shortly.

"And why 'ah!' dear boy?"

"I don't go in for that sort of thing."

"Perhaps not," said Mr. Delabole, in his airiest manner; "but because you are virtuous, are there to be no more cakes and ale? It was really a very pleasant little gathering, not the less so from the touch of romance attending the circumstances."

"Romance?" echoed Philip Vane, with a laugh. "What was there romantic about it? Was the landlord so fascinated by Miss Lotty's *beaux yeux*, that he declined to take any money for the bill, or was the brilliancy so contagious that one of the waiters exhibited a talent which he had hitherto hidden under a napkin?"

"Neither, dear boy," said Mr. Delabole, quietly, "nor was any one rude—as you are just now! Rudeness isn't clever, dear boy, and as a general rule doesn't pay. No! the little spice of romance was derivable from the fact that it was a farewell banquet to Lotty, who, with her little troupe, has been engaged by Wuff on a travelling engagement for three years, and quits these shores for America next week."

"What a blow for England!" said Philip Vane; "how she will sigh over her departing children!"

"There are others of her children," said Mr. Delabole, "who may some day be called upon to depart from her shores, under different circumstances, and whom she will not regard so much! As for myself, little Lotty always amused me, and I am sorry she is going; I could have better spared a better woman. That's a quotation, I believe, but oddly enough it's true."

"If you are so fond of her, why don't you go with her?" said Vane.

"Because it wouldn't suit me, dear boy; because there is no opening for me; because—I don't want to, in point of fact. But, for the matter of that, why don't you? Wuff's at his wife's end for a leading man and leading woman. Let me write him a line, and say I have found the first in you?"

A sudden thought struck Philip Vane. "Hold on a minute and drop chaffing. Does he really want a leading actress to go out with this lot with him? Not a dancing, capering wench, I mean, but a woman who can act?"

"He does want one most infernally."

"What will he give?"

"Well, our friend Wuff isn't in the open-handed, melting, charity line, but I should think he would stand six pounds a week, and travelling expenses. He gives Lotty ten I know, but then——"

"I'll find him the person he wants," said Philip Vane, quickly.

"You, dear boy?" said Delabole, surprised. "I thought you said just now you were not in that line?"

"Nor am I, but when I was down in the West the other day, I saw a girl—Miss Pierpoint, I think she was called——"

"Pierpoint!" said Delabole. "Yes, I've heard of her in the provinces. Good, isn't she?"

"So far as I understand these matters, very good," said Vane; "a friend of mine is interested in her."

"Ah, ah," said Delabole, "we know what that means."

Vane knew, too, what Delabole's tone meant; knew that it was his wife thus alluded to, but took no notice.

"I mean," he continued, "I would be glad to see her position improved, and this is an opportunity which I think would suit her."

"I would, if I were you, dear boy," said Delabole, looking at him straight in the face, "I would just put on my friend's hat and my friend's coat, put my friend into the train, and get him to discuss the matter with Miss Pierpoint."

"You think that's devilish funny," said Major Vane, returning his stare, "but you're wrong for once. The woman is nothing to me, only I thought it might suit her, and do your friend a good turn at the same time."

"All right, dear boy," said Mr. Delabole. "I will let Wuff know. If it comes off, she must start next week."

"I have heard," said Mr. Delabole to himself, as he climbed into the mail Phaeton which was waiting for him at the door, "I have heard Philip tell a great many lies cleverly, but never so cleverly as that one he told just now. His face was a perfect study of candour. Pierpoint? I'll make a little memorandum of this conversation when I get into the city."

When Philip Vane had finished his breakfast, he went into the writing-room, and wrote this letter to his wife:

Friday.

You need not send up the benefit money to-morrow, I will come down and fetch it.

Meet me in the same place at the same time, I have something very important to say to you.

SPECTRES OF OUR TIME.

THE unfailing interest which attaches to a well-authenticated ghost-story—not to speak of the equally robust expectation that, from each fresh phenomenon as it occurs, shall be born a theory of explanation that may cover much that is foregone—furnishes a sufficient excuse for continuing to arrest and chronicle, if we may not analyse, those mysterious gleams that shoot across our ordinary life, and vanish, leaving only, according to circumstances, a perplexed recollection or an indistinct fear.

"Is there not a cause?" Again and again is the question propounded, and never yet, so far as the writer is aware, has it called forth any answer calculated to retain the colour of reason under the powerful lens of philosophical inquiry.

Is the vision due to the seer or the seen? If the former, how is it that a condition, unquestionably so peculiar and abnormal as to produce the needful receptivity, is reached at precisely the same moment, by two or more individuals, differing entirely in mental and bodily constitution, and yet witnesses of the same vision? If, on the other hand, these spectra can reveal themselves at pleasure, how strange is it that the sole result that most frequently follows such departures from the hitherto recognised laws of nature, is the alarming some timid infant, or stolid ignorant boor?

That ghosts have local predilections is a fact hardly less familiar than the popular mode of accounting for it, namely, tradition, by virtue of which the spectre is forcibly kept going, and is conjured up whenever there is danger of its disappearing for good and all. But even a ghost must have a beginning, and how, when there is as yet no tradition?

There was none at D., an extensive property in Essex, sixteen years ago, in the possession of the writer's brother, where an extraordinary incident of this description undoubtedly occurred.

D. Church, a picturesque old edifice, well mantled in ivy, and half-concealed on two sides by cypress and the dismal yew, stands in the park, about a quarter of a mile from the hall. It was about sixteen years since that the clerk, a very staid and sober man, much respected in the parish,

having had occasion, one autumn evening, to visit the church, returned hastily, pale and disordered, to his home, and announced that a strange thing had befallen him. He had quitted the church while it was yet light, and was half-way down the path, when a figure appeared to enter by the churchyard gate, and move to meet him. It was that of a woman of the cottage class, decently dressed, and wearing a red cloak. She seemed to be stooping, but, as the distance lessened, the horrified man saw that she was headless! As he shrank instinctively from the path, the spectre, without staying its measured step, passed close beside him, and, having done so, disappeared.

The man's serious and truthful character appears to have considerably narrowed the field of explanation. No one doubted that he had really seen the vision he described, and it was equally undeniable that no one could explain its object and character. The circumstance itself left a very painful impression on the poor clerk's mind, and possibly acted injuriously on his already failing health. He died within a few months, having frequently adverted to the occurrence, adhering to the story as he had from the first related it.

Two years later, at a spot in the graveyard close to that at which he had encountered the vision, there was dug up the headless skeleton of a woman.

This, however, is only half the story.

Several years more elapsed, and the rectory of J. had passed into the hands of the Reverend A. W. H., an old friend and schoolfellow of the writer, from whose lips the latter learned the incident that follows.

One morning the rector received an unexpected visit from a friend whom he had not seen for some time, and who had never previously visited that part of the country. During luncheon, the rector happened to speak in commendation of an organ which had been recently placed in his church, upon which the visitor, Mr. S., himself a skilful organist, expressed a wish to try it, and presently, under the guidance of one of his host's daughters, Miss Emily H., proceeded to the spot.

It was a hot summer afternoon, and the pair lingered in the cool organ-loft, enjoying the swelling chords, as each in turn essayed the instrument. It was Mr. S. who was playing, when his companion noticed that, after glancing carelessly over his shoulder, his gaze became suddenly fixed, his hands stopped, his face became deadly pale.

Before Miss H. could question him, however, he had regained his usual demeanour.

"It is gone," he said, passing his hand across his forehead, with a sigh as of relief. "But, do you know, I have seen a spectre!"

The young lady smiled, as she looked down the aisle, radiant with the westering sun, as it glowed through the stained-glass windows. "You are imaginative. What was it like? Whence did it come?"

"The last question I will not pretend to answer," replied Mr. S. "I only know that she—that is, it—entered at the door, passed hastily up the aisle, and vanished."

"Could you see the face?"

"There was none. The figure was headless."

"What dress?"

"Such as a farmer's or cottager's wife might wear going to market. Her red cloak first caught my eye. She carried something on her left arm. It is getting late," continued Mr. S., rising, "and this unexpected auditor has disturbed my nerves. Shall we take a turn in the park?"

They did so, meeting the rector, to whom they related the incident that had occurred. Mr. H. said little in reply, but on reaching home requested his visitor to make a sketch on paper of the figure he had seen. Mr. S. complied, when the rector, going to a cabinet, took from it another sketch, and placed them, side by side, on the table. They were in all respects similar.

Relating to his friend the former apparition, Mr. H. explained that the sketch in his possession had been prepared from the minute description of the first seer.

The circumstance next to be related, in illustration of the local character of those "visitings," is unique of its kind, and grotesque enough in its details to justify as minute a narrative as authenticated information can supply.

It is, the writer believes, about five years since, that an advertisement announced to be let, on lease, a handsome mansion, standing in its own grounds (about twenty acres), ten miles from London and one from a railway station, the rent being no more than one hundred a year. Now, seeing that land in that locality could be easily let at three pounds an acre, it followed that any one, willing to dispense with the meadow portion of the property, might inhabit the many-roomed mansion, with its garden, &c., at a rent of fifty pounds.

Tempted by this prospect, a gentleman named Ronaldson, about to marry, and desirous of settling within reach of his pro-

fessional duties (he was at the bar), obtained an order from the agent in London, and proceeded to examine the mansion.

Nothing could be more delightful. It stood in a very sequestered spot, nearly a mile distant even from the very little village of W., whose one modest hostel, the Red Cow, seemed sufficient to supply all the needs of that temperate neighbourhood. The house itself far surpassed the representations of the advertisement; and what even more excited Mr. Ronaldson's astonishment was the fact, first revealed to him by the staid old housekeeper, that several of the best apartments were fitted with old but handsome furniture, the use of which was included in the terms demanded.

So charmed was the visitor with all he saw, that he at once resolved on taking the house, and, only giving himself time to take the measure of the rooms which remained to be furnished, hastened back to London, to close with the agent, having informed the old housekeeper that he would return on the following Saturday to make final arrangements.

It chanced that, on the day in question, Mr. Ronaldson was unable to visit W. until so late an hour that the dark surprised him while still engaged in acquainting himself with the charms and capabilities of his new dwelling. Anxious, however, to complete the business, he expressed an intention of remaining to sleep, and requested that a large bedroom, to which he had taken a strong fancy, might be prepared for him.

The housekeeper began immediately to start a host of difficulties. The room itself was damp—the bed-linen unaired—the chimney choked with soot, &c. The gentleman would find the Red Cow, though small, very clean and comfortable, and, moreover, would there find a good supper, which the unfurnished larder of the mansion certainly could not supply.

But Mr. Ronaldson was of a character that rather relished a contest with difficulties. He would be content, for the nonce, with a sofa. As for supper, a rasher of bacon, with a couple of eggs and a cup of tea, were all that he required, and were, in fact, his favourite refectation.

The housekeeper reluctantly gave way, and only warning the visitor that, if he were not lodged and fed to his entire satisfaction, the blame should not rest with her, withdrew to make preparation.

A far better repast than he had been led to expect rewarded Mr. Ronaldson's perseverance. Furthermore, the housekeeper presently pronounced the enormous bed

to be perfectly dry, and, in point of comfort, worthy of the occupation of royalty itself! It seemed as if—now there was no help for it—the visitor was to be made as comfortable as possible.

On being conducted to his chamber, Mr. Ronaldson found it a perfect blaze of splendour. Every place in the room calculated for the reception of a candle, exhibited one.

"My good lady!" said the astonished guest, shading his eyes, "I cannot sleep in the midst of this illumination! Pray help me to reduce it a little."

With curious reluctance the old woman aided in the extinguishment of about four-fifths of the lights; after which she continued to flit restlessly about the room so long, that Mr. Ronaldson, losing patience, announced his intention of retiring instantly to rest.

The housekeeper moved to the door, but, pausing, came back.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she said; "I have one favour to ask, and it is for your own comfort too. Be so kind as to leave at least one light burning when you go to bed."

"I am not accustomed to a light in my room, and dislike it very much," he replied. "So if you mean it, as you say, for my comfort—"

"I do, sir, and I request it particularly," said the woman, earnestly.

"All right. I'll remember. Good-night."

Mr. Ronaldson sat musing for a little while by the fire; then, starting up, undressed, put out all the remaining lights, and was in the act of stepping into bed when he remembered his promise.

"Dence take it," he muttered. "But I must be as good as my word." And, relighting a candle, he placed it on a side-table, and got into bed.

Nothing could be cosier, but still it so happened that he could not sleep. No change of position was of any avail. Rest he could not; and thinking that perhaps the unaccustomed light had banished slumber, he at length sprang out of bed, blew out the candle, and returned to his rest. No sooner had he lain down than a singular hoarse murmur, like a distant sea, made itself audible from below. By degrees, growing louder, it resolved itself into voices—the voices of men engaged in a dispute, which every moment became more violent. Oaths and imprecations succeeded, and, at length, blows. Upon this Mr. Ronaldson jumped out of bed and lit the candle. In an instant all was still as death. He rubbed his eyes:

"I must have been dreaming without knowing it," he muttered.

But, on looking at his watch, he found that not three minutes had elapsed since he had last lain down.

Once more he got into bed; but again the light annoyed him, and he extinguished it. In a second, the mysterious quarrel recommenced, with greater fury than before. The voices rose louder, the execrations were more frequent, there was a rush and trample of feet, then blows, delivered, apparently, with savage purpose. Ronaldson once more lit the candle. The tumult ceased as suddenly and completely as before.

Ronaldson took a turn or two in the chamber, debating what he should do. Was it fancy? Some mental disturbance beyond his control? He felt his pulse, he bathed his face, and, finally, resolved to try the experiment calmly once again. He placed the lighted candle beside the bed, and, lying down, extinguished it with a wave of his handkerchief. The contest below was resumed with twofold violence. It was, as the listener declared, like a battle of fionds! Foreign languages were used, but little more than imprecations were intelligible, and, strangest feature of all, those expressions which seemed to proceed from English combatants were, as Mr. Ronaldson affirmed, such as belonged to a former age.

Cries and groans succeeded, and Mr. Ronaldson, unable to remain quiescent while such a scene was, even in fancy, proceeding beneath him, for the last time left his bed, and lit, not only his bed-candle, but every other candle in the apartment. All again was still, but the visitor had had enough, and paced the haunted room till morning.

Upon questioning the housekeeper, that staid person simply inquired if the request she had made had been complied with, and, finding it was not, respectfully, but positively, refused any responsibility as to the consequences which, she was ready to admit, usually followed. Nor could her questioner obtain any further satisfaction from this quarter.

He was not more fortunate with the agent, to whom he related the disturbances which, if not explained, would certainly compel him to resign the bargain. The agent merely bowed, and handed him back the agreement.

The excitement of that night at W. affected Mr. Ronaldson's health. A week or two later, he was attacked with brain fever, from which, however, he completely

recovered. It might be suggested that this was rather the cause, than effect, of the nocturnal conflict at W.; but how account for the request and conduct of the housekeeper, and the entire absence of surprise on the part of that very practical and business-like man, the agent, when informed that this spacious and most desirable family mansion was uninhabitable by reason of the quarrels of ghostly banditti?

If haunted houses are as plentiful in London itself as some persons assert, it may really become necessary to insert in leases a short conditional clause, having reference to this form of disturbance. The incumbent of a West-end district was but recently consulted on the subject of a large house, but a few hundred yards from Belgrave-square, from which tenant after tenant had departed in despair, and in which no servant could be persuaded to remain. Not to mention mysterious noises, "spirit" hands were both felt and seen. The fact is at least curious that, in this house, several years since, a now defunct spiritualist society held occasional meetings.

Another very large house, in a fashionable street, had to be given up by the lessee, a distinguished general officer, at a considerable sacrifice, his lady's rest, and indeed his own, being perpetually broken by smothered shrieks, of which it proved impossible to ascertain the cause.

But, of all the spectres of our time, none have, in amount and character of testimony, exceeded that of B., personally investigated by the writer, a few weeks after the commencement of the disturbing influence.

It was in a letter from a friend residing in the neighbourhood—Sir C. S.—that the writer received intimation of certain occurrences at B., so remarkable, yet so authentic, as to justify a visit of inquiry to the spot.

The pretty, sequestered village of B. is situated a few miles from Rugby, and consists only of a few small dwellings of the cottage class, the inhabitants of which appeared both clean, sober, and intelligent, with manners which might have done honour to a more polished community.

In this village died, March the 3rd, 1851, a Mrs. Knebb, aged sixty-seven. Born and bred in the place, she had married, late in life, a person of some means, who, dying, left her in easy circumstances for persons of her class, the cottage in which she resided forming a portion of her own property. She was, however, of a most penurious disposition, concealing to the utmost

her means of subsistence, and denying herself the necessities of life to such an extent as to bring on the illness of which she subsequently died.

During this illness she was supplied with all she needed by her nephew, Mr. Hart, a farmer, and was nursed by her neighbours, Mrs. Holding and Mrs. Griffin, her habits retaining such hold upon her that she, on one occasion, pretending to be penniless, sent Mrs. Holding to beg for sixpence to purchase brandy.

As her end approached she betrayed no mental disquietude, but, when turned in her bed by her two attendants, expressed an opinion that she should not survive that night, adding that she trusted it would prove so, and that before another she would be in paradise.

She did, in fact, die that night, having a short time before left everything, by will, with the executorship, to her nephew, Mr. Hart.

A month after the funeral, Mrs. Holding and her uncle, who occupied the cottage adjoining that of the deceased, which had been shut up, were alarmed by loud thumps against the partition wall, slamming of doors, and sounds as of furniture violently thrown about. This last circumstance was the stranger, seeing that everything had been removed from the building. But, on entering the house, all was quiet.

These noises generally commenced about two o'clock A.M. (the time of the old woman's death), but sometimes earlier, and caused so much alarm that Mrs. Holding declared they could never bear to go to bed till eleven, an unheard-of dissipation at B., in order that, when they did retire, fatigue might enable them to sleep through it all.

One night, however, the noise was so fearful that Mrs. Holding got up and went in search of her uncle, who was absent. His consolatory comment was simply:

"Well, missis, I do believe there's our Missis Knebb come back!"

On the 9th of April the family of a respectable sawyer, named Accleton, tempted by the low rent, came into the disturbed house.

Mrs. Accleton informed the writer that she occupied the bedroom in which the old woman died, a rather lofty and commodious apartment, having in the ceiling a small trap-door, leading to a sort of loft among the rafters. Accleton was much from home, but the eldest child, a girl of ten, slept in a small bed in a corner, about three paces from her mother.

On one occasion, soon after they entered, Mrs. A. was awakened, about two in the morning, by a tremendous crash in the room below. Thinking it was her husband, who had gone to Hilmorton feast, she called out, "Oh, so you've come home at last, I can hear."

No answer was returned, but the noises were renewed, at intervals, until seven o'clock, when the husband returned.

Similar sounds were heard nearly every night, but nothing was seen until one night, or rather morning, about two, the elder Accletons were aroused by loud shrieks from the child:

"Mother, mother! There's a woman standing by my bed, a-shaking her head at me."

The parents saw nothing, but the child persisting, Accleton got up, and approached the bed, saying:

"Nonsense, nonsense, girl. It's only your mother's cap and gown hanging on your bed."

(This was not the case, it being merely said to pacify her.)

The girl, however, reiterated her story, adding that the woman wore a white cap and mottled gown, and was very tall. (The deceased, Mrs. Knebb, was five feet eleven inches in height.)

All was now quiet till about four, when the child, who had been lying with her face to the wall, shrieked out again in an agony of terror:

"Mother, mother! Here's that woman again!"

She declared that the visitor had awakened her by turning the corner of the sheet over her face.

The apparition was seen by the little girl in all, seven times, and her health, the mother declared, had been seriously injured by the nervous shock, though, "by the blessing of God, and with youth on her side," she would now get over it.

She was a pretty, blue-eyed, intelligent child, with a frank, infantine manner, the reverse of cunning. She told the writer that the spectre came with a low laughing, or singing voice, was surrounded by a "brown light," stood erect with folded hands, and gazed at her in a bold, firm manner.

Up to this time, some degree of incredulity existed among the neighbours as to the child's statement, a feeling never partaken by the mother. But all doubts were soon to be set at rest.

Mrs. Accleton, whose mother was sleeping with her, in the absence of her husband,

was awakened one morning, at two, by a sudden light in the room. In an instant, the idea of the spectral presence crossed her mind, and she at first closed her eyes, resolved not to see it, but, regaining courage,

"I said to myself," she related, "the Lord's will be done. I never did her any harm. With that, I lifted my head from the pillow, and there she stood, at the bed's foot, and 'set' me as firm and proud as if she was alive. I looked at her full five minutes. Then I spoke to my mother, who was awake, and told her there was Mrs. Knebb. But she only said, 'Lord help us, don't see it!' and pulled the clothes over her head."

Mrs. Accleaton had previously declared her intention to address the spirit, should it appear, but her courage proved unequal to this, though, she added, it moved towards her with a gentle and appealing manner, and even slightly touched the bolster, "as though it would have said, 'Speak, speak.'" The form and face were distinctly visible in a misty light; it was beyond question the presentment of the deceased woman.

Mrs. Radburn, a determined-looking dame of about threescore, who had enjoyed the dangerous honour of partaking Mrs. Accleaton's couch, stated that she was aroused one night by a pressure on her elbow. The room was so light that, mistaking it for dawn, she prepared to rise, when a clock struck two, and she in the same instant became aware of the presence of the apparition. It stood between her and the window. "Patches of light" were about the room, all the witnesses alluding to coruscations of some description, which always accompanied the spectre, as it went "flustering" through the apartment.

A very well-mannered and intelligent woman was Mrs. Griffin, before-mentioned, who had nursed the deceased, and performed the last offices to the dead. She, too, was aroused at the same hour by the same cause. She, however, possessed more nerve than her neighbours, for though conscious of the presence of the apparition, she determined to baulk it.

"I 'sleered' my eyes through the room, sir, and said, 'My old wench, you shan't know I'm seeing of you.'"

The spirit, however, exercised some compulsory power, or curiosity did, and Mrs. Griffin saw the spectre, looking "bold and impudent," and wearing a dark mottled gown, and a double-bordered white cap, in which she was dressed for the grave.

The usual brownish light was visible, pervading the room, and sending streams or "ribbons" of lustre towards that portion of the ceiling where the trap-door was situated.

All these parties referred to the moaning noise made by the phantom, and compared it to the constant moaning made by the deceased during her last hours.

The most extraordinary feature of the story has yet to be narrated.

The circumstance of streams of light pointing always towards the before-mentioned trap-door, coupled with certain conjectures, engendered by the deceased's miserly ways, induced a suggestion that money might be concealed in the loft above, and, an appeal being made to Mr. Hart, the nephew and executor, he proceeded to the house, and, assisted by Mrs. Accleaton, who held the ladder by which he reached the trap, crept into the loft.

It was totally dark, and the candle was thrice blown out by the eddying draughts before he reached the inner recesses. Presently he called out that he had found a parcel, and flung down into the room a bundle of old deeds.

A minute later he cried out again, and hastily descended, bringing with him a large bag, secured with twine, and covered with dust and cobwebs. On opening it, notes and gold were found to a considerable amount.

On being asked if he did not appear surprised or elated at such a discovery, Mrs. Accleaton replied that he displayed much agitation, shed tears, and said that "now he trusted the poor soul would rest in peace."

The expectation was not immediately fulfilled. Three days, indeed, elapsed in quiet, but, on the fourth, the noises recommenced worse than ever.

Mr. Hart now proceeded to examine more closely into the affairs of the deceased, when certain debts were discovered still existing against her estate. These were scrupulously satisfied, after which (the dead year, as Mrs. Radburn called it, being up) all disturbance ceased.

Such are the facts of the B. ghost, detailed, by those questioned, with all the appearance of perfect sincerity and good faith. They were undoubtedly respectable, and seemingly religious persons, impressed with a deep reverence for things divine. It may have been but fancy, still the idea certainly crossed the writer's mind, that the wonderful visitation to which these poor people believed themselves to have

been subjected had had the effect of somewhat refining their coarse natures, and imparting to their language and manner a sort of dignity not usually characteristic of their class in life.

Understanding that the reverend rector of B. had expressed doubts of the story, the writer inquired as to this point.

"Yes, yes, sir," was the prompt reply. "Mr. G. may say so, and think so, but seeing is believing, and not twenty Mr. G.'s can convince us, four sane people, against the evidence of our own eyes and ears. Mr. G. is a very good gentleman, but he has not seen what *we* saw."

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

SOUTHAMPTON BUILDINGS (CHANCERY-LANE END).

FROM the bad, gay times of Charles the Second, we find Southampton-buildings tenanted by nonentities, who were born, ate, married, slept, and died unrecorded by any bard. But in 1820 a ray of light strikes them, and one of the least popular, but by no means the least remarkable, of the Charles Lamb set came to lodge at No. 9, half-way down on the right-hand side as you come from Holborn. There for four years lived, taught, wrote, and suffered that admirable essayist, fine art and theatrical critic, thoughtful metaphysician, and miserable man, William Hazlitt. He lodged at the house of Mr. Walker, a tailor, who was blessed with two fair daughters, with one of whom, Sarah, Hazlitt, a married man, fell madly in love. He declared she was like the Madonna (she seems really to have been a cold, calculating flirt, rather afraid of her wild lover). To the *Liber Amoris*, a most stultifying series of dialogues between Hazlitt and the lodging-house keeper's daughter, the author appended a drawing of an antique gem (*Lucretia*), which he declared to be the very image of the obdurate tailor's daughter.

This untoward but remarkably gifted man, whom Lamb admired, if he did not love, and whom Leigh Hunt regarded as a spirit highly endowed, usually spent his evenings at the Southampton; as we take it, that coffee-house on the left hand, next the Patent Office, as you enter the Buildings from Chancery-lane. It is an unpretending public-house now, with the quiet, bald-looking coffee-room altered, but still one likes to wander past the place and think that Hazlitt, his hand still warm with the grip of Lamb's, has entered it often.

In an essay on Coffee-House Politicians, in the second volume of his *Table Talk*, Hazlitt has sketched the coterie at the Southampton, in a manner not unworthy of Steele. The picture wants Sir Richard's mellow Jan Steen colour, but it possesses much of Wilkie's dainty touch and keen appreciation of character. Let us call up the old customers at the Southampton from the dead, and take a glass with them. First of all comes Mr. George Kirkpatrick, who was admired by William, the sleek, neat waiter (who had a music-master to teach him the flageolet two hours every morning before the maids were up), for his temper in managing an argument. Mr. Kirkpatrick was one of those bland, simpering, self-complacent men, who, unshakable from the high tower of their own self-satisfaction, look down upon your arguments from their magnificent elevation. "I will explain," was his condescending phrase. If you corrected the intolerable magnifico, he corrected your correction; if you hinted at an obvious blunder, he was always aware what your mistaken objection would be. He and his clique would spend a whole evening on a wager as to whether the first edition of Doctor Johnson's Dictionary was quarto or folio. The confident assertions, the cautious ventures, the length of time demanded to ascertain the fact, the precise terms of the forfeit, the provisos for getting out of paying it at last, led to a long and inextricable discussion. Kirkpatrick's vanity, however, one night led him into a terrible pitfall. He recklessly ventured money on the fact that the *Mourning Bride* was written by Shakespeare; headlong he fell, and ruefully he partook of the bowl of punch for which he had to pay. As a rule his nightly outlay seldom exceeded sevenpence. Four hours' good conversation for sevenpence made the Southampton the cheapest of London clubs.

Kirkpatrick's brother Roger was the *Mercutio* to his *Shallow*. Roger was a rare fellow, "of the driest humour and the nicest tact, of infinite sleights and evasions, of a picked phraseology, and the very soul of mimicry." He had the mind of a harlequin; his wit was acrobatic, and threw somersaults. He took in a character at a glance, and he threw a pun at you as dexterously as a fly-fisher casts his fly over a trout's nose. "How finely," says Hazlitt, in his best and heartiest mood, "how finely, how truly, how gaily he took off the company at the Southampton! Poor and faint are my sketches compared to his! It was like

looking into a camera obscura—you saw faces shining and speaking. The smoke curled, the lights dazzled, the oak wainscoting took a higher polish; there was old S., tall and gaunt, with his couplet from Pope and case at Nisi Prius, Mudford eyeing the ventilator, and lying perdu for a moral, and H. and A. taking another friendly finishing glass. These and many more windfalls of character he gave us in thought, word, and action. I remember his once describing three different persons together to myself and Martin Burney (a bibulous nephew of Madame D'Arblay, and a great friend of Charles Lamb's), namely, the manager of a country theatre, a tragic and a comic performer, till we were ready to tumble on the floor with laughing at the oddity of their humours, and at Roger's extraordinary powers of ventriloquism, bodily and mental; and Burney said (such was the vividness of the scene) that when he awoke the next morning he wondered what three amusing characters he had been in company with the evening before." He was fond also of imitating old Mudford of the Courier, a fat, port, dull man, who had left the Morning Chronicle in 1814, just as Hazlitt joined it, and was renowned for having written a reply to Coelebs. He would enter a room, fold up his great-coat, take out a little pocket volume, lay it down to think, rubbing all the time the fleshy calf of his leg with dull gravity, and intense and stolid self-complacency, and start out of his reveries when addressed with the same inimitable rapid exclamation of "Eh!" Doctor Whittle, a large, plain-faced Moravian preacher, who had turned physician, was another of his chosen impersonations. Roger represented the honest, vain, empty man purchasing an ounce of tea by stratagem to astonish a favoured guest: he portrayed him on the summit of a narrow, winding, and very steep staircase, contemplating in airy security the imaginary approach of duns. This worthy doctor on one occasion, when watching Sarratt, the great chess-player, turned suddenly to Hazlitt, and said, "I think I could dance. I'm sure I could; ay, I could dance like Vestris." Such were the odd people Roger caricatured, on the memorable night he pulled off his coat to eat beef-steaks on equal terms with Martin Burney.

Then there was C., who, from his slender neck, shrillness of voice, and his ever-ready quibble and laugh at himself, was for some time taken for a lawyer, with which folk the Buildings were then, as

now, much infested. But on careful inquiry he turned out to be a patent medicine seller, who at leisure moments had studied Blackstone and the statutes at large from mere sympathy with the neighbourhood. E. came next, a rich tradesman, Tory in grain, and an everlasting babbler on the strong side of politics; querulous, dictatorial, and with a peevish whine in his voice like a beaten schoolboy. He was a stout advocate for the Bourbons and the National Debt, and was duly disliked by Hazlitt we may feel assured. The Bourbons he affirmed to be the choice of the French people, the Debt necessary to the salvation of these kingdoms. To a little inoffensive man, "of a saturnine aspect but simple conceptions," Hazlitt once heard him say grandly:

"I will tell you, sir. I will make my proposition so clear that you will be convinced of the truth of my observation in a moment. Consider, sir, the number of trades that would be thrown out of employ if the Debt were done away with. What would become of the porcelain manufacture without it?" He would then show the company a flower, the production of his own garden, calling it a unique and curious exotic, and hold forth on his carnations, his country-house, and his old English hospitality, though he never invited a friend to come down to a Sunday's dinner. Mean and ostentatious, insolent and servile, he did not know whether to treat those he conversed with as if they were his porters or his customers. The prentice boy was not yet ground out of him, and his imagination hovered between his grand new country mansion and the workhouse. Opposed to him and every one else was K., a radical reformer and tedious logician, who wanted to make short work of the taxes and National Debt, reconstruct the government from first principles, and shatter the Holy Alliance at a blow. He was for crushing out the future prospects of society as with a machine, and for starting where the French revolution had begun five-and-twenty years before. He was a born disturber, and never agreed to more than half a proposition at a time. Being very stingy, he generally brought a bunch of radishes with him for economy, and would give a penny to a band of musicians at the door, observing that he liked their performance better than all the opera squalling. His objections to the National Debt arose from motives of personal economy, and he objected to Mr. Canning's pension because it took a farthing a year out of his own pocket.

Another great sachem at the Southampton was Mr. George Mouncey, of the firm of Mouncey and Gray, solicitors, Staples Inn. "He was," says Hazlitt, "the oldest frequenter of the place, the latest sitter-up; well informed, unobtrusive, and that sturdy old English character, a lover of truth and justice. He never approved of anything unfair or illiberal, and, though good-natured and gentleman-like, never let an absurd or unjust proposition pass him without expressing dissent." He was much liked by Hazlitt, for they had mutual friends, and Mouncey had been intimate with most of the wits and men about town for twenty years before.

He had known Tobin, Wordsworth, Porson, Wilson, Paley, and Erskine. He would speak of Paley's pleasantry and unassuming manners, and describe Porson's deep potations and long quotations at the Cider Cellars. Warming with his theme, Hazlitt goes on in his essay to etch one memorable evening at the Southampton. A few only were left, "like stars at break of day," the discourse and the ale were growing sweeter. Mouncey, Hazlitt, and a man named Wells alone remained. The conversation turned on the frail beauties of Charles the Second's court, and from thence passed to Count Grammont, their gallant, gay, and not over-scrupulous historian. Each one cited his favourite passage in turn—from Jacob Hall, the rope-dancer, they progressed by pleasant stages of talk to pale Miss Churchill, and her fortunate fall from her horse. Wells then spoke of Apuleius and his Golden Ass, the Cupid and Psyche, and the romance of Heliodorus, Theogenes and Chariclea, which, as he affirmed, opened with a pastoral landscape equal to one of Claude's. "The night waned," says the delightful essayist, "but our glasses brightened, enriched with the pearls of Grecian story. Our cup-bearer slept in a corner of the room, like another Endymion, in the pale rays of a half-extinguished lamp, and, starting up at a fresh summons for a further supply, he swore it was too late, and was inexorable to entreaty. Mouncey sat with his hat on, and a hectic flush in his face while any hope remained, but as soon as we rose to go, he dashed out of the room as quick as lightning, determined not to be the last. I said some time after to the waiter that 'Mr. Mouncey was no flincher.' 'Oh, sir!' says he, 'you should have known him formerly. Now he is quite another man; he seldom stays later than one or two; then he used to help sing catches and all sorts.'"

While living in that state of half-assumed love frenzy at No. 9, Southampton-buildings, Hazlitt produced some of his best work. His noble lectures on the age of Elizabeth had just been delivered, and he was writing for the Edinburgh Review, the New Monthly Magazine, and the London Magazine, in conjunction with Charles Lamb, Reynolds, Barry Cornwall, De Quincy, and Wainwright (Janus Weathercock) the poisoner. In 1821, he published his volume of Dramatic Criticisms, and his Table Talk; in 1823, his foolish Liber Amoris; and in 1824, his Sketches of the Principal English Picture Galleries.

Hazlitt, who was born in 1778, and died 1830, was the son of a Unitarian minister of Irish descent. Hazlitt was at first intended for an artist, but coming to London, soon drifted into literature. He became a parliamentary reporter to the Morning Chronicle in 1813, and in that wearing occupation injured his naturally weak digestion. In 1814, he succeeded Mudford, as theatrical critic, on Perry's paper. In 1815, he joined the Champion, and in 1818 wrote for the Yellow Dwarf. Hazlitt's habits at No. 9 were enough to have killed a rhinoceros. He sat up half the night, and rose about one or two. He then remained drinking the strongest black tea, nibbling a roll, and reading (no appetite, of course) till about five. He took supper at the Southampton; his jaded stomach then roused, he ate a heavy meal of steak or game, frequently drinking during his long and suicidal vigils three or four quarts of water. Wine and spirits he latterly never touched. Morbidly self-conscious, touchy, morose, he believed that his aspect and manner were strange and disagreeable to his friends, and that every one was perpetually insulting him. He had a magnificent forehead, regular features, pale as marble, and a profusion of curly black hair, but his eyes were shy and suspicious. His manner when not at his ease, Mr. P. G. Patmore describes as worthy of Apemantus himself. He entered a room as if he had been brought in in custody. He shuffled sidelong to the nearest chair, sat down on the extreme corner of it, dropped his hat on the floor, buried his chin in his stock, vented his usual pet phrase on such occasions, "It's a fine day," and resigned himself moodily to social misery. If the talk did not suit him, he bore it a certain time, silent, self-absorbed, as a man condemned to death, then suddenly, with a brusque "Well, good morning," shuffled to the door, and blundered his way out, audibly

cursing himself for his folly in voluntarily making himself a laughing-stock of an idiot's critical servants. It must have been hard to bear with such a man, whatever might be his talent, and yet his dying words were, "I've led a happy life."

TWO SURREY LANDSCAPES.

I. SPRING.

APPLE-trees bunched with pink and white,
King cups (Oberon's) gilt and bright.
Meadows speckled with spots of gold
To-morrow will double a thousandfold.
Rooks that strut as black and solemn,
Under the poplar's leafy column,
As newly appointed pluralists.
Elms that through the evening mists
Look like giant mutes in gloom
Gathered around a nation's tomb.
But this is the shadowy twilight time.
Why should I sadden my April rhyme
With thoughts of night? No, let me sing
Of the bird that throws from its ruffling wing
The clover's dew, while the thrush below
Whistles so gay where thickest grow
Ashes and hazels, and where till dark
The cuckoo utters his one remark,
Cuckoo!

II. SUMMER.

The brown-faced mower, with sweeping scythe,
Whose bright steel has cut its lavish tithe
Of great ox-daisies as white as milk,
And soft green grass-blades soft as silk,
And those purple plumes that children bind
In bunches tied with the sycamore rind,
Is resting now beneath the shade
The spreading, generous oak has made.
That great brown jar has gurgling treasure
To yield its thirsty master pleasure.
And down the long grey swathes that lie
Before him, flits the butterfly.
Ah! spendthrift of the sunshine, see
Those flowers you passed so carelessly
But one hour since. Out idler gay,
You've squandered all your little day.
Night lurks behind that distant hill,
Where the long ranks of firs are still,
That hill with a drifting cloud for its crest,
And a scarf of sunshine athwart its breast.
Sunshine!

A TRIP TO THE LAND OF SCOTT.

PART I.

[In our last Raid over the Border into the land celebrated in the poems and romances of Sir Walter Scott (see ALL THE YEAR ROUND, No. 111), we halted at the venerable castle and town of Stirling. In the approaching tourist season, a more than usually numerous swarm of travellers and sight-seers from all parts of the world will be attracted to Edinburgh, to the Scottish Border, and the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland, in consequence of the centenary of Sir Walter's birth, which is to be celebrated in a manner becoming the respect, affection, and admiration of the Scottish for the character and genius of their great countryman. In view of, and in preparation for the event, we resume the series at the point where we left off, and ask our readers to accompany us in our rambles over the glorious scenery which Sir Walter's pen has rendered classic.]

IN travelling by rail from Stirling to Callander, we leave unvisited, though not

unseen, the village and castle of Doune, the scene of Edward Waverley's temporary imprisonment. There is a bridge over the Teith at Doune, built three hundred years ago by a worthy tailor, who was not in the least degree ashamed of his business, as the following inscription on the parapet abundantly testifies: "In God is all my trust, said Spittal. The 10th day of December, in the year of God 1553, founded was this bridge, by Robert Spittal, Tailor to the Most Noble Princess Margaret, Queen to James the Fourth." It would appear that in those days ladies employed men to make their garments, as they did but recently in Paris, under the pleasant but extravagant reign of the fair Empress Eugénie. Why, it may be asked, en passant, the ridicule thrown upon tailors? Did it commence in the feudal ages, when every man was supposed to be a warrior, and tailoring was held to be women's work? In this connexion, as the Americans would say, it is recorded of a late alderman of London, who had been a saddler, that he objected strongly to the candidature of a tailor for the office of sheriff. The tailor replied that he saw no force in the objection. The alderman had been himself a sheriff, and his trade was to make clothes for horses. He, the tailor, made clothes for men, a clearly superior calling.

From Doune we skirt along the Teith and arrive at the fashionable village of Callander. We are now at the very entrance of the Highlands, and the great Bens rear their giant heads to the north and west—Ben Ledi, Ben Venue, Ben Lawers, and others less celebrated: while as we journey onwards, Ben Lomond and Ben Arthur, of greater altitude, appear in due succession.

At Callander, whose mild climate recommends it to invalids, there is little to interest the hale and hearty, unless it be a ramble to the top of Ben Ledi, which towers above it, the dominant mountain of the place, and a stroll to the Lynn or Fall of Brachla. Ben Ledi means in the Gaelic language the Mount of God, a name which is derived from its consecration, in the Druidic ages, to the Celtic and Phœnician divinity Bel or Baal. Beltane or Bel Tein, the fire of Bel, was celebrated on the 1st of May, and Beltane E'en still signifies in Scottish parlance the Eve of May Day, as appears from its frequent mention in ballad literature.

It was the custom in the Druidic days at Callander, for the whole population to

assemble on Ben Ledi on May morning, to receive from the hands of the priest the "need-fire," all other fires and lights throughout the realm having been extinguished on Beltane E'en, in order to be relighted from the sacred fire on the altar. "Any one," says Colonel Robertson, in his Gaelic Topography of Scotland, "who has ever been at the summit of Ben Ledi, must have noticed that the top, instead of being bare and rocky like those of other mountains, is remarkably verdant, having been evidently cleared of stones, and smoothed by the hand of man;" and by the fact also, one would think, that the feet of a large population had annually ascended it during many hundred years, in the performance of a solemn religious ceremony. Beltane E'en is still a kind of festival among the peasantry in remote districts, if any district can be called remote in our railway era. Some account of the Beltane E'en observances may be found in the valuable treatise on the Darker Superstitions of Scotland, by Mr. Graham Dalyell.

"Bracklynn's thundering wave," as Scott calls the Lynn or Fall of Brackla, is the leap made by a mountain stream, called the Keltie, in its course from the hill-side to join the Teith, about a mile and a half from the village. It is a point of duty among all visitors to Callander to visit this beautiful fall—a favourable view of which is obtained from a rustic bridge erected for the purpose.

There are so many pleasant trips to be made to every point of the compass from Callander, that the difficulty is to choose which shall be the first. So great, however, is the fascination exercised over the minds of most people by the genius of Scott in the *Lady of the Lake*, as well as in *Rob Roy*, that nine tourists out of ten decide without hesitation in favour of the Trossachs and Loch Katrine, famous as the scenes of the adventures of the gallant Knight of Snowdon, the fierce Roderick Dhu, and the gentle Ellen Douglas. We decide to do otherwise for reasons of our own, resolving to make the Trossachs the last, instead of the first of our excursions, in order that we may take Loch Lomond in our way, ascend the Ben if the weather be favourable, and thence proceed to Glasgow, or such other point on the Clyde, as may be most convenient for our future movements. We avoid, accordingly, the beaten track, and wend our way to the less frequented regions of the Lake of Monteith and the clachan of Aberfoyle; the

latter known by name to every one who has read *Rob Roy*. A drive of three miles brings us within sight of the small sheet of water called Loch Rusky, in which is a little island where John Monteath, who betrayed Wallace to the English, once possessed a castle, of which the ruins still remain. The Monteaths were a noble house, notwithstanding the evil fame of one of their race, and left bright marks upon the history of their country to atone for the one black spot that will ever attach to the name in the minds of the romantic youth of Caledonia.

At the Port of Monteath, a little village or clachan on the shore of the beautiful lake, boats may be procured for conveyance to the Island of Inchmahome, or the Island of Rest, one of the most interesting places in Scotland. Thither we were rowed accordingly, and found the ruins of an Augustine priory, said by tradition to have been erected by Edgar, son of Malcolm Canmore, in a time that is almost prehistoric. All who visit this little frequented part of Scotland, lying so near to, and yet so out of the beaten track of tourists, look with much interest upon a little piece of garden ground, scarce twenty yards in circumference, surrounded by a box-hedge of about six feet high. There seems nothing particular about it at a first glance, and it is only when the visitor learns that the garden was made, and the box-hedge planted by a little child, of three years of age, more than three hundred and twenty years ago, that the tiny plot of earth attracts attention. After the battle of Pinkie, on the day still known as Black Saturday, when the Scottish forces, under the Earl of Arran, regent of the realm, were defeated by the English, under the command of the Protector Somerset, the infant Queen of Scotland was sent to Inchmahome to be out of the reach of danger. With her were sent as playmates and companions, four other little maidens, all named Mary, "the Queen's Marys," as they were afterwards called. The mournful ballad of the Queen's Marys, in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, represents the four as "Mary Beaton and Mary Seaton, Mary Carmichael and me;" me, the heroine of the tragical love-story, being Mary Hamilton. But the real Marys attendant on the queen in her infancy were Mary Beaton, Mary Seaton, Mary Fleming, and Mary Livingston. As time wore on, some of the Marys either died or left the court; but long after she became a queen in power, and a woman in experience, the lovely Queen of Scots made it

a custom to have four Marys as her ladies of honour, until at last it became a common phrase to speak or sing of a favourite waiting-woman as a Mary. The child's garden of Inchmahome, with its tall box-hedge, and its little enclosure overgrown with rank luxuriant weeds, and with bushes that have reached the altitude of trees, is a touching spectacle to such as can carry back imagination to the times when the innocent child, so sorely in her after life to be buffeted on the storms of passion and suffering, frolicked in her little isle, with nothing to do but to learn her daily lessons under the tuition of worthy John Erskine, the prior of the monastery, to tend her flower-beds, and to make merry with her artless companions. After having had charge of the little queen for two years in the Isle of Rest, Erskine was commissioned by the Scottish Estates to convey her to France to be educated under the auspices of the French king, with a view to her ultimate marriage with the Dauphin. They embarked on board of a French ship-of-war, from Dumbarton Castle, attended by the four faithful Marys, and her three natural brothers, grown men, and ruthless as the other Scottish nobles of their time, and who each envied her her legitimacy, and the throne which it gave her. When Mary returned to Scotland, a lovely young widow, eleven years afterwards, her four faithful Marys returned with her. It was on the 19th of August, 1561, when the weather should have been bright in Scotland, that the great John Knox, an unfriendly and prejudiced observer, mentions the day as one of evil appearance and omen. "The very face of heaven," he says, "at the time of her arrival, did manifestly speak what comfort was brought into the country with her; to wit, sorrow, dolour, darkness, and all impiety. In the memory of man, that day of the year was never seen a more dolorous face of the heaven than was at her arrival, which two days after did so continue: for, besides the surface wet (wet) and corruption of the air, the mist was so thick and so dark, that scarce might any man espy another the length of two butts. The sun was not seen to shine for two days before and two days after. That forewarning God gave to us! But, alas! the most part were blind." The happiness of poor Mary's life ended in France; and she returned to Scotland with a presentiment almost as gloomy as that of John Knox, that dark days were in store for her and for her native country, of whose people and manners she knew so little that was

favourable, and so much that was forbidding. Mary never revisited the Isle of Rest, never may be said to have known rest at all, until the final scene at Fotheringhay, when the axe of the headsman ushered her to that final repose of the grave, in which she found the peace that cruel Fate had so persistently denied her while living.

We leave Inchmahome with regret, and proceed to the clachan of Aberfoyle, a distance of about four miles, through a picturesque country, Ben Lomond looming grandly in the distance, "hill paramount and watch-tower of the clime."

It was at Aberfoyle, as all readers of Rob Roy will remember, that the excellent Bailie Nichol Jarvie met Major Galbraith, and had his memorable encounter with that hero, armed with a red-hot poker to defend himself from the major's sword. Until very recent times, it was the custom at Aberfoyle to exhibit to visitors the identical poker which the Bailie used in the encounter, from which he came out with so much credit; but the new generation has grown sceptical, and no more believes in the Bailie's poker than it does in the veritable pair of pincers with which St. Anthony pinched the devil's nose, which used to be, and possibly is still shown to the curious somewhere down in Sussex.

From Aberfoyle, after due refreshment on "the wine of the country," with oat-cake, and such transcendently good butter as Scotland and Switzerland alone can supply, we continue our course to Loch Ard and Loch Chon, places little visited, but among the wildest and grandest within the compass of the British Isles. In the solitudes of this region, under the landward shadow of Ben Lomond, the Regent Murdoch, Duke of Albany, took refuge from the cares of his uneasy and thankless sovereignty, and from a castle, which he built for himself on a small island in Loch Ard, he was taken captive to Stirling, and there executed. Two miles behind Loch Ard, lies Loch Chon, than which, with all its accessories of crag and mountain and wild-wooded defiles, there is nothing more romantically and savagely picturesque in Scotland. Both of these lochs are favourite resorts of such happy anglers as can obtain the privilege of fishing in their well-stocked waters.

The second excursion which we resolve to make from Callander is to the Braes and the Kirk of Balquhither, or Balquhiddy, in the heart of the country of the great Clan Gregor, or MacAlpine, a district, almost

every hill, dell, and mountain torrent of which is renowned in song and story.

The road lies almost due north, by Bochastle, a spur or ridge of Ben Ledi, of which mention is more than once made in the *Lady of the Lake*, and through the small village of Kilmahog, where, over the door of a wayside inn, we see a rude attempt at heroic art, in the shape of a sign, representing a duel between two ferocious-looking combatants, one of whom, in the Highland garb, represents Roderick Dhu, and the other the Knight of Snowdoun. Continuing this road we come to the celebrated Pass of Leni, one of the entrances to those Alpine regions, which a very small force of the native population could, and often did, defend successfully against vastly superior numbers. Emerging from this rugged defile, we come in sight of Loch Lubnaig, or the Crooked Lake, about five miles in length, surrounded by steep, and in some places perpendicular banks of crag and mountain, which throw their deep shadows far over the lake, and give it the dark and gloomy aspect which it exhibits, except when the sun pours its meridian rays directly upon it. Half-way up the loch on the eastern side stands a solitary farm-house, called Ardechullerie, the property, but not the residence, of a ripe scholar, the well-known and highly-respected Laird of Kier; and noted as the place where another scholar, Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, secluded himself from the world, while engaged in writing the work which has made his name famous.

Skirting Loch Lubnaig for its whole course, and thence traversing for three miles the district of Strathire, we diverge from the high road eastwards at Kingshouse, and enter, upon the village and the Braes of Balquhither. At Kirkton, close to Loch Voil, where a new church has recently been erected, highly useful in the neighbourhood, but not very ornamental—and Scottish churches seldom are ornamental, except in the great cities—lie, buried side by side, the famous Rob Roy and Helen, his wife. A heavy slab of grey stone, without any inscription to denote the names of the "poor inhabitants below," lies over each grave. On the tombstone of Rob is rudely sculptured a Highland broadsword, the weapon that he could wield so well, and in the use of which, from his great strength as well as his length of arm (he was able to tie his garter below his knee without stooping) he was more than a match for all com-

petitors. At the head of Loch Voil, a smaller sheet of water than Loch Lubnaig, still stands the house of Inverlochlarly, where he lived during the peaceful latter years of a life of more than average storminess in its youth and maturity, and where he died at an advanced age in 1736. The history of the Clan Gregor, and of Rob Roy, its last great central character, are well told by Sir Walter Scott in the introduction to the *Abbotsford Edition* of the novel. The whole of the circumstances connected with the cruel persecution of the clan during many ages would, if truly told—as they have never yet been—reflect high discredit, not only upon the great families who were the immediate neighbours of the Macgregors, but upon the governments both of Scotland and England, which legalised the rapacity and vindictiveness of those who sought to profit by the extermination of a race which had given many kings to Scotland before the Stuarts were ever heard of. Even Scott himself has not done historical justice to Rob Roy, who was not a thief, in the Saxon and vulgar acceptance of the word, and who only laid himself open to the charge of being a robber and a freebooter, because, in conformity with the wild and all but regal notions of his tribe, and of the Highlanders generally, he considered himself as much entitled to wage war against his enemies, as the king of Great Britain. Private war is murder and robbery in the eyes of the law, but they were not such in the eyes of Robert Macgregor, or in those of any of his clan contemporaries, who did not hope to profit in lands and honour by the impoverishment and ruin of the Macgregors. Rob Roy was a Highland gentleman, neither much better nor much worse than his neighbours, and, when he died, was honoured with a funeral which showed the high estimation in which he was held, and at which all the gentry and leading people for fifty miles round attended.

One story of Balquhither, characteristic alike of the Macgregors and their enemies, and of a barbarous time, but too recently passed away, is recorded by Sir Walter Scott in the introduction to the *Legend of Montrose*, and forms the main incident of that romance. This murder cost the Macgregors dear, for the privy council of Scotland granted a commission to the Earl of Huntly and others, to attack and pursue the offenders with fire and sword, and exterminate them, like wild beasts, wherever they might be found; a commission which appears to have been executed with the utmost rigour. At a subsequent time the

Macgregors were forbidden to wear armour, or to use any weapons except a blunt knife to carve their food with, and their very name was considered too offensive to belong to a good man and a loyal subject, and was consequently rendered illegal. A worthy gentleman of this ancient clan, still living and flourishing, maintains that the Macgregors, notwithstanding all the persecutions they have suffered, are the greatest and noblest of the clans; that all others are by hundreds of years their juniors, and that all mankind are divided into three classes; first, the Macgregors proper; second, those who, by their virtue, bravery, and genius, are worthy to be Macgregors; and, thirdly, the *oi polloi*, the swinish multitude, who are too ignorant and brutal to rank on an equality with the meanest member of the royal clan. This worthy gentleman's idea hurts nobody, and is as amusing to his friends as it is consolatory to himself. He does me the honour to say that I ought to be a Macgregor, and hints that, somehow or other, though neither he nor I can trace the genealogy, I must have had a member of that glorious clan among my maternal ancestors.

Passing from Rob Roy's grave, and forgetting for awhile the rights and the wrongs, the bravery and the cruelty, the chivalry and the lawlessness of the turbulent but much-wronged family, who were first of all oppressed, and then barbarously punished for resistance, we retrace our steps to Kingshouse, and proceed to Lochearn Head, or as it was formerly, and ought still to be called, Kinloch Earn. Here, at the commodious inn that commands a view of the loch in its full length and breadth, we put up our steeds and order dinner. There is no lovelier spot in Scotland, or one in which it would be pleasanter for a man wearied with mental work to take up his abode for a couple of summer months, with nothing to do but to explore the glens, thread the mazes of the streams, climb the mountain tops, row or sail upon the placid water surrounded by hills, like a gem in its setting, or, if his tastes inclined that way, to make war upon the pike, the trout, and the salmo ferox which abound in the rivers that run into the loch.

Our third and last excursion from Callander is the one best known and most popular, and one never omitted by the tourists, who are attracted to Scotland by their admiration of Scott's genius, and who think themselves bound in duty to tread

the beaten track which he has celebrated. With these hero-worshipping tourists, not to see Loch Katrine and the Trossachs is not to see Scotland, and so thoroughly is Scott master of their movements that they leave unvisited hundreds of scenes as beautiful as any which he has described, and which lie in close proximity to the well-worn track. To any one who has Scott's poetry in remembrance it is easy to cite the various passages that mention the places on this well-frequented road. First is Coilantogle Ford, at which Roderick Dhu's safe-conduct of the Knight of Snowdown ended; and next is Loch Vennachar, in the description of which the poet has lavished all his wealth of imagery. Vennachar is five miles in length, and neither more nor less lovely than five hundred other lakes and lakelets that gem all the west of Scotland, and of which the praises have not yet been sung by any bard or minstrel known to fame in our day.

Most travellers desire to obtain a glimpse of Lanrick Mead, the trysting-place of the Clan Gregor, to which Malise in the poem summons the son from the funeral of his father, the bridegroom from his bride at the altar, the ploughman from the field, the smith from the anvil, to carry out the high behests of their chieftain. The place is only interesting for its association with the poem, but no reader of Scott passes it without the tribute which genius exacts from its admirers. The Bridge of Turk, where Fitz-James shot ahead of all his companions in the chase, and "rode alone," and by so doing led to the incidents and the catastrophe of the poem, is next passed. Beyond the Bridge of Turk is Loch Achray, smaller than Loch Vennachar. Its northern shore is bold, rocky, and picturesque, and brings us to what many travellers consider to be the crowning glory and beauty of Scottish scenery, the world-renowned Trossachs. The name in Gaelic signifies the rough and broken territory which it was, when no road existed through it, except that which was traced by the feet of the roving Highlander. In days not very remote, when Queen Victoria was in her youth, there was a comfortable little inn in the Trossachs, with an all but unpronounceable Gaelic name; but since that time the great stream of summer travel has so largely increased, that a spacious baronial hostelry has displaced its humble predecessor, and taken possession of the place in the name of "modern improvement." I for one am not ashamed to own that I regret the disappearance of the little inn, with its few

travellers, every one of whom was a welcome guest. The new building is doubtless a convenience, but its appearance is not in keeping with the wild accessories of the scene, and jars upon the harmony of surrounding objects like a discord in music. Hence, after due rest and refreshment, we push on to Loch Katrine, or the lake of the Catterans (be it said, by the way, that this etymology is disputed). This lake has been so often and so well described in prose and verse, and notably by the great wizard himself, that any new pen that would attempt to do justice to its mingled loveliness and grandeur has a hard task. Language, at the best, is poor and weak in the description of the sublimities of nature. There are but few adjectives that can be employed, and they speedily become threadbare, and the mock raptures of sentimental description convey but faint impressions. It is of little use to tell the world that such a scene is fine, or lovely, or grand, or solemn, or sublime. The world either does not understand the epithets, or interprets them in a manner different from that of the writer; and there is an end. It must suffice to say that the scenery of the Trossachs disappoints none of the pilgrims who come to visit it, and that it is a fortunate thing for everybody in the neighbourhood, who owns land or who has his living to get, that Sir Walter Scott came, saw, admired, and described it.

Loch Katrine has its utilitarian as well as its romantic aspects. It supplies the city of Glasgow, nearly forty miles distant, with an abundant, and, in case of need, an over-abundant wealth of the finest water in the world. Happy is Glasgow to be so provided. Happy would London be if it were only half as well cared for. The needs of Glasgow, amply as they are met, make but little, if any, difference in the broad expanse of Loch Katrine. The mountains feed the lake with their constant rills, and burns, and foaming torrents, and Glasgow takes away the superfluity, leaving Loch Katrine none the poorer for the abundant largess which she has given to the crowded city.

We of course visit Ellen's Isle, the isle where the Lady of the Lake, in the poem but not in the fact, lived in a castle, such as only a novelist could have created in so limited a space. The sail over the lake is beautiful exceedingly, and the little isle itself, steep of ascent, is well worth a visit on its own account, irrespective of the halo of romantic glamour which the poet's genius has thrown over it. But for the in-

struction of a matter-of-fact age, let it be here recorded that there never was a house, much less a castle upon it, and that Ellen's home might as well have been in the clouds as in the little isle of Loch Katrine.

This queen or empress of Scottish lakes, as she might be called were there no Loch Lomond, Loch Long, or Loch Awe to contest the sovereignty, is about ten miles in length, with an average breadth of a mile and a half. Having used up all my adjectives, I can say no more about it than to advise all those who seek for fine scenery in continental Europe, or America, or anywhere else under the benignant sun, to try this part of Scotland; and if they are not satisfied, the fault will lie in themselves.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LXIX. A RIOT.

In the mean time, Maud had reached the steps of the door which opens on the terrace-walk of the quadrangle; and from that elevation she made a survey of the ground.

This fruitless pursuit of her hostess was beginning to grow ridiculous; she would have laughed, I dare say, if she had not been also very near crying. For her comprehensive survey was unrewarded by a sight of Lady Mardykes; and here was she already in the third day of her visit, without having yet exchanged a word with her hostess, or having been introduced to a single person; and were it not for the absurdly magnificent proofs of Lady Mardykes's very marked attention to her comforts and luxuries, displayed in the number of rooms assigned to her use, and the exquisite taste in which they were furnished, she would have begun to suspect that Lady Mardykes had quite forgotten that she had ever invited her to Carsbrook. Occupied, somewhat uncomfortably, with these thoughts, Maud wandered across the croquet-ground, and up and down some of the shady alleys which lie beyond it. But her search was fruitless. Lady Mardykes was nowhere to be found.

So Maud, disappointed and a little offended, returned with a slower step to the place from whence she came, wondering whether she was ever to meet Lady Mardykes again.

Her guests certainly did not seem to trouble her a great deal, and, so far as Maud could see, she was pleased to leave

them very much to amuse and take care of themselves.

Well, it was disappointing; but, after all, Lady Mardykes was sure to be home for luncheon, possibly an hour before it. In the mean time, other people might introduce themselves, as had happened yesterday, and so her acquaintance might grow.

Her anticipations were quickly justified, for as she was walking down, by this time pretty well resigned to her disappointment, toward the yew-hedge walk, a singular-looking person accosted her.

He was almost a pigmy in stature, and his air was ineffably pompous; his face was long and pallid, with a turn-up nose, and he wore an expression of conceit and scorn as he eyed passers-by, such as Miss Vernon could not have believed in except perhaps in the caricature of a pantomime. He walked slowly, rising on his toes as he did so, and carried a big portfolio and a small shagreen case under his arm, and a quadrant strapped across his back. To Miss Vernon he made a slight bow and a smile, so transitory that it amounted to little more than a momentary grimace, the effect of which was rather odd than alluring.

His long chin terminated in a lank white beard, unaccompanied by either whisker or moustache. A solemn gloom overspread his countenance, and an habitual look of surprise made his small eyes round, except when a smirk of contempt or of self-esteem lighted his face.

It seemed to be the rule in this house not to wait for introduction. The appearance of this dwarfish sage aroused Miss Vernon's curiosity, and she was rather glad that she had so quickly found some one willing to entertain her.

"You have heard, madam," said he, walking at her side, "of Laplace, of Newton, you have heard of Watt, you have heard of Davy. I see, by your head and eye, that you have an intellect and an interest for the physical sciences, and, I need scarcely add, you have heard of Sidebotham, and the perpetuum mobile. He is at present a guest at this place, and of course he comes and goes as he pleases."

"Oh? Indeed!" said Miss Vernon, affecting a greater interest in the worthies of science than perhaps she felt, and ashamed to admit that she had never before heard of Sidebotham in that brilliant muster-roll. "Lady Mardykes has so many distinguished guests that one is scarcely surprised to meet any great name among them."

He simpered with gratified self-complacency and made his bow, and in an instant was more solemn than ever.

"The individual who has the honour of addressing you," he continued, "is Sidebotham, the mechanist, the mechanical genius of this, and *all* ages, as I have had the honour of being termed."

At this moment a sweet voice inquired:

"Well, Mr. Sidebotham, how goes on the perpetual motion?"

And raising her eyes, Maud saw the Duchess of Falconbury before her, smiling.

"That is a question that answers itself," said the professor, slowly averting his face with upturned nose and a sublime sneer. "How goes on the perpetuum mobile? Why it goes on *for ever*? Ha, ha, ha!"

And he laughed, as demons do in melodramas, in three distinct "Ha's."

Her grace was not in the least ruffled, for her attention was engaged by a melancholy but gentleman-like looking man who was approaching.

"You see that man," whispered the duchess in Maud's ear; her eyes looking down the shady walk, which they had now entered.

"The Spanish ambassador?" inquired Maud, who saw that minister, in the antique costume which he affected, approaching with toes turned out, at a slow and grand pace, in the rear of the melancholy man.

"Ambassador! He's *no* ambassador, my dear; he has lost his head a little; he's a Mr. Ap-Jenkins, who has a slate quarry in Carnarvonshire; but it is not about him. You see this man in black who walks towards us, looking down on the gravel over his shoulder. Did you ever see such a comically miserable face? When he comes up we'll talk to him; he'll amuse you."

Maud thought that such pining misery and malignity as were expressed in that dark face, could not have been conveyed in the human countenance.

The duchess said, as he was passing by, unheeding:

"I hope, Mr. Poinders, you find that boiling sensation a little better to-day?"

"Sensation?" he repeated, stopping suddenly, and raising his dreadful face. "Heat and motion tell pretty plainly, when water, much less blood, is bubbling at a boil? No, not, better, *worse*. My blood boils; as yesterday, so to-day, and so for ever and ever, amen!"

"I'm so sorry," said the duchess, pressing her hand ever so little on Maud's arm,

by way of showing her enjoyment of what was passing.

The sufferer, about to resume his walk, added :

"And I am subject, to-day, to violent shocks of electricity."

He ground his teeth, and muttered to himself, and so passed on. The duchess was laughing quietly, as she turned again to Maud, who was anything but amused; she was very much shocked, on the contrary.

"The poor man is perfectly mad," whispered the duchess

Miss Vernon felt a hand laid softly on her shoulder, before she could speak; and looking round, saw that frightful face.

He said rapidly, with his eyes close to hers :

"I am beyond the hope of salvation!"

And he turned and pursued his slow, solitary walk through the valley of the shadow of death. What on earth could induce Lady Mardykes to permit a mad-man to walk about these grounds? A filmy suspicion was stealing over Maud, too terrific for utterance.

The Spanish ambassador, in full fig, arrived. There was an opening just here in the yew-hedge, and a low hedge of sweet-briar, running for some yards, at the edge of the walk, made the air at this spot fragrant.

His excellency, the Spanish minister, having arrived, the little party came to a halt, here commanding a view of the house and the croquet-ground, as well as one of the long and sequestered alleys in both directions.

The minister made his king-like greeting. They were standing on the grass, that with a broad belt skirts the walk; the croquet-ground before them, the little sweet-briar hedge in the rear.

His excellency, notwithstanding the sultry weather, wears, as before, the skirt of his black mantle flung across his breast, over his shoulder. He is speaking loud, throwing his chest well out; his head is thrown back, his dark eyes half-closed. His clear brown complexion and black moustache, white, even teeth, and handsome features, lend a cavalier-like grace to the contemptuous smile with which he surveys the pigmy of perpetual motion, and flouts him with a lofty irony.

The dialogue grows a little more spirited, as the ambassador with folded arms persists in his lofty vein of banter. The homunculus becomes more fiercely voluble on his perpetual motion, and treats his excellency with a good deal less ceremony

than he likes. Both parties are waxing fiery.

"Mechanic! perpetuum mobile! Professor! Philosopher!" said his excellency, smiling on, and quite closing his eyes for a short time. "A great European name. Sidebotham and Co., grocers, Cheapside. Why, no one who lives near you can fail to discover the perpetual motion. It exists in your tongue, ha, ha! your tongue—it is nowhere else about you—and it never ceases."

The sage gasped; sprang back two or three steps; and rose, as usual, to his toes, with his fists clenched, trembling all over, his teeth set, and his eyes starting from their sockets.

"You have no business talking so," said the duchess, haughtily, "if we spare you all inquiry into the authenticity of your diploma, or whatever you please to call it, I think you might, at least, remember what is due to rank; you can hardly suppose that it can be an agreeable pastime to the Duchess of Falconbury to witness a low quarrel between two such persons as Mr. Sidebotham and Mr. Ap-Jenkins."

But the minister, nothing moved from his faith in his own representative dignity, smiled superbly, with folded arms, his black cane, tipped with its golden crown, held gracefully in his French-gloved hand, and with his chin high in air, he observed, in a tone of cold ridicule :

"Duchess of Falconbury! Ha! ha! ha! How charmingly that comes from the lips of Mrs. Fish, of New York!"

And he made the lady a satirically ceremonious bow.

The eyes of the duchess gleamed actual fire; her face, her very lips grew white. She stood open-lipped and breathless. It was hard to say whether the great lady or the pigmy was most furiously agitated.

To the latter his excellency turned again with a haughty wave of his white-gloved hand, and observed :

"As for you, you illiterate dwarf and grocer, I shall order my secretary to take you by the cocked-nose, and jerk you over that wall, like one of your own bad red-herrings."

The lady uttered a sudden scream of fury, and the philosopher jumped in the air, and slapped his forehead, with a roulade of blasphemies, yelling still more shrilly, "Let me—let me—I'll annihilate him! I'll annihilate him!" and they rushed nearly together upon his excellency the Spanish ambassador, who smiled in haughty scorn, as well he might, of such an attack.

The homunculus, strung to double his natural strength by fury, was first to reach the object of assault, and grasping the Goliath in his arms below the knees, and, nothing daunted by the untoward interference of his own quadrant, which, in the feat, swung over his head, and hit him a smart blow over the nose, lifted the minister fairly off his feet; and this superb personage, in spite of a frantic effort to recover his equilibrium, fell backward, with an undignified souse, and a grunt, through the tangled hedge of sweet-briar, so that half his person lay on the grass, at the other side, and his shapely legs were struggling wildly for escape, at this.

With the acumen and promptitude of her sex, the enraged duchess caught up the jet-black cane with its head of gold, that had flown from his hand, and with immense rapidity discharged a shower of whistling cuts, right and left, on the silken calves of the ambassador, who kicked right and left, shrieking horrible threats and wild appeals to his sovereign, to heaven, to the laws of nations, to his servants, in the vain endeavour to struggle through the thick fence, while the professor of mechanics, who had transferred himself to the other side, seized his hair and moustache in both hands, and with his heels against his shoulders, tugged as hard as if it had been to tear his last beefsteak from the jaws of a tiger. The ambassador was roaring "murder" by this time, and the shrieks and gabble of the executioners rose horribly over his roars of panic, while his mouth was dragged upward at the corners by the moustache into a monstrous caricature of a smile.

The uproar, wilder and fiercer, alarmed the loungers and the croquet players. Mallets were dropped and balls abandoned. Some whooped and threw up their hats in saturnine ferocity. Others broke into screeching laughter. A frightful and contagious excitement ran swiftly through the strange throng.

At this moment, however, several strong, grave-looking men, who acted unobserved as a patrol in these pleasure-grounds, came running up at the top of their speed to quell the outbreak.

Professor Sidebotham let go the moustache and dropped the ambassador's head on the ground, as an Irishman would say, like a hot potato; rearranged his quadrant and recovered his hat, concealed his bleeding nose with one hand, and affected to be a sedate professor and an ornament to

society, and highly to disapprove of the mysterious riot.

Not so the duchess. She had tasted blood, and plied the supple cane with shrieks and Billingsgate, resolutely, and even ferociously, resisting all interference. She turned now upon the men who had caught her wrists and disarmed her; she scratched, she stamped, she kicked, she bit.

Darkdale emerged from the house in the midst of this struggle. He had a strange, short garment in his hand with enormously long sleeves. The duchess seemed to recognise this, for at sight of it she redoubled her struggles, she became quite furious. By a kind of magic, in spite of all, without violence, by a sinister dexterity, Darkdale with the aid of the other men got it on her. The arms were drawn across her breast, and the long sleeves crossed and tied behind, so that no force or skill which she could exert could in the least avail to extricate her.

All her struggles could effect nothing. She was quietly and completely overpowered and hurried, now uttering long despairing screams, but no longer offering active resistance, swiftly across the grass to the terrace, and so disappeared into the door through which she had lately emerged in so different a mood.

"What is that you have just put upon that lady?" Maud, who was horribly agitated, inquired of a broad-shouldered, dark-faced man in a short fustian-coat. He looked at her silently for a minute, and smiled cynically.

"It is a thing we call a strait-waist-coat," he answered.

"But that is for people who are quite mad," said Maud.

"Well, I take it," he replied, "you don't want to see no one madder than that."

CHAPTER LXX. CAGED.

It seemed to Maud Vernon that she did not breathe once, from the time she left the scene of the too significant buffoonery she had just witnessed, until she found herself, she could not tell how, in her own dressing-room.

It seemed as if she awoke there.

She saw Mercy Creswell standing with her back against the wall, pale as a ghost, with a dark stare, and the corners of her mouth screwed down hard as she gazed at her. She looked scared and guilty, and as if she expected she did not know what; her hands she held folded together as

tightly as the joints could clasp, and was as motionless as the wooden door-case behind her, and never took her frightened, watchful eyes off her young mistress.

There was something in the look and mien of the young lady, you may be sure, to account for the panic of the maid.

Miss Vernon sat down trembling, and then got up, pressing her hands to her temples, with a terrible look of helplessness, and she walked round and round the room, with long stifled moans. After a time she stopped, and looked slowly about her.

"My God!" she gasped, "I'm terrified! Did it all happen?"

She glided over to the window, and looked out on the gaily-dressed and busy crowd, and, with a cry of despairing terror, she covered her eyes with her hands.

Now she is passed swiftly from one room to another, back and forward; and thus she ran toward Mercy Creswell, and standing fixed, like an apparition, before her, cried:

"I see it all; I understand it now! Mercy Creswell, help me to think. Do you know what has happened? My God! they have inveigled me into a madhouse! Oh, you wretch—you have led me into a madhouse!" The sentence broke into a shriek at the close.

"Now don't, Miss Maud, don't, now; there's a darling!" cried Mercy Creswell, as quick and shrill as the words could fly from her lips, and with her hands extended towards her. "Ye'll take a parrokism, ye will, indeed; indeed ye will; ye'll take a parrokism, if ye don't be quiet; ye will, ye'll have it."

"You have done it; and mamma; and Lady Marydykes; and cousin Max. Merciful God! All my friends! And cousin Maximilla! There's no one left—I have none to help me! Oh! where shall I hide? Help me to think of something, Mercy Creswell, my old friend; you could not forsake me—you would not. Poor Miss Maud. Oh, think of long ago, at Roydon; if ever you hope for God's forgiveness, get me out of this horrible place."

"It wasn't me, miss, so it wasn't; so 'elp me, miss; 'twas your mamma. I've no more to do with it, as God's my 'ope, than the bintant babe unborn," protested Mercy Creswell, in a shrilly whine.

"I'll not stay in this dreadful place," cried Maud, "I'll lose my life, or I'll get out of it. Oh! mamma—mamma—how could you—could you—could you? I shall go mad. I can't stay here! I'll not eat or drink here; I'll find a way, some way, a

short way. Oh, mamma! you'll be sorry, then."

Again she was walking swiftly from room to room. Now up and down the floor of one; now to and fro across the floor of another, shifting her hands across her forehead with an uncertain movement.

"I can't be imprisoned here; I'm not a slave. Where is the nearest posting-house? I'll have advice; I'll write to Mr. Coke; that can't be prevented; I'll escape from this house now."

And she ran to the bedroom door.

Mercy Creswell knew that it was secured, and running into the dressing-room, she adroitly bolted the door of communication between the two apartments.

Maud now found herself a prisoner in her room. She tried both doors with growing impetuosity, but they resisted her utmost efforts.

Her own maid had locked her in, by a trick, and she was securely imprisoned in her room. This outrage fired her resentment so as, for the moment, to displace her panic.

"Open the door," she cried, shaking the lock with all her strength; "Mercy Creswell, open the door," she repeated again and again; and she heard the creak of the servant's shoe, faintly, as she stood holding her breath, close to the other side of the door.

"Open the door; how dare you treat me so? Am I to be insulted by my own servant? Let me out."

Mercy heard her run to the window, and throw it up. More cadaverous than ever her face looked, as, in a momentary hesitation, she extended her dumpy fingers, that trembled visibly, to the bolt, but she changed her mind, and withdrawing her hand, ran, instead, to the brass handle that was fixed in the wall, pulled it, and a deep-toned bell sounded all down the gallery. She had remembered that the window as it went up, drew with it a strong wire grating, which made it safe against all attempts at escape, or worse.

She stood on the gallery, and almost instantly two of those firmly-knit, hardy women, whom we may call housemaids, emerged from a room at its further end, which formed a sort of guard-room for the detachment in charge of that wing of the house, and up they came at a jog-trot; and almost at the same instant, for the alarm sounded also in the opposite direction, the iron door across the passage opened, and a keeper, a powerful man, in

barragan jacket, with a white scar across his brown forehead and nose, telling of old service, entered, clanging the door behind him. Beckoning them on, and waiting till they were ready to enter, Mercy unlocked the door of Maud's room, keeping herself in the rear.

"Who are you?" asked Maud, who was standing now in the middle of the room; "I have been led to suppose, this is my room. What do you all want here?"

The man stepped in.

"By your leave, miss," said he, looking with his shrewd quick glance at her hands, and then, with another, about the room; and then striding to the window, and shutting it down, he turned some little pins at the side, and said to Mercy: "You should 'a fixed the window."

"There's the grating, though."

"No matter," he replied.

"What do you mean by shutting my window without my leave?" inquired Maud, with a fiery glance.

The man took no notice of the question, but asked Mercy Creswell:

"Is there fire-irons, or anything hard and heavy, that way, here?"

"No, nothing," answered she.

"But I asked you——" repeated Maud Vernon.

"I'll attend to you just now, miss," said the man. "Nor nothing sharp?" he continued.

"I'll mention your conduct. Who is in the house, to whom I can make a complaint?" said the young lady, who was not accustomed to be treated so by servants.

She had directed her question to Mercy Creswell; but the man answered it, scarcely looking at her, as he did so.

"To the doctor, please, miss, Doctor Antomarchi," and he continued in the same even tone. "You should not 'a left her alone; don't you know this 'ere number's entered questionable? Mr. Darkdale will put another with you if you want her. Look here."

And he wet his thumb in his mouth, and turned over the leaves of a little book rapidly, and showed her something inscribed upon a page.

"Well I *would* like another in call. She could sit in the next room, d'ye see; I'm not fit alone," said Mercy Creswell, with nervous earnestness.

"I'll not remain here, I shan't stay, I'll go," said Maud, going to the wardrobe and pulling the drawers open, and beginning to place her things upon the table close by.

"And ye shouldn't leave a thing like that here," said the man, with a frown and a wag of his head, availing himself of Maud's having gone to a distant part of the room, and taking in his hand the silk cord of her dressing-gown, which lay on the back of a chair close by. "You might 'a remembered Miss Bangles, it ain't so long ago. Is there any more bits of cord about?"

"No, not one."

"Tell some one to order me a chaise from the nearest place, as soon as possible, or go and order it yourself," said Maud to the man.

"But I can't, miss; none of us, without the doctor's orders."

"Then I'll go on foot, I'll go this moment. Tell him I've left."

The man looked away with a sheepish smile, amused, and cleared his voice, and then looked grave.

"It won't do, miss; you can't go out without the doctor's order, and you must make your mind 'appy; for you can no more go out o' this house, without it was allowed, than you could walk through a wall. But it is easy for you, miss, to talk to the doctor, and tell him what ye wants, and if you persuades him, it will be all right, you know; and he's a reasonable gentleman; and anyhow, it can't do no one no harm."

Maud walked about the room, agitated.

"Very good," she said at last, "tell him I should like to see him."

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 1871.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

CHAPTER V. A MEETING BY MOONLIGHT.

MISS PIERREPOINT'S benefit was even a greater success than her warmest and most sanguine friends had anticipated. The dramatic critic of the Wexeter Flying Post remarked the next day that "such a galaxy of beauty and fashion had never before been gathered together in our little temple of Thespis."

And he was almost justified in his statement. The clerical party was fully represented. The bishop was away in London; but the dean was there, rosy and bland, following the text of the tragedy in a large quarto volume, which he had brought with him, beating time to the delivery of Mercutio's speech about Queen Mab as though he had been conducting an oratorio, and benignly deaf to the profane remarks with which the representative of Colonel Hardy in Paul Pry thought fit to season the author's dialogue. Emboldened by their august leader's presence and evident delight, the other pillars of the church gradually relaxed from the extreme state of severity into which they had thought fit to settle themselves on their entrance, while the female members of their families sighed over Juliet's woes, and tittered at Phoebe's impudence, in unrestrained freedom. Be sure that Probus, the coach-maker and Shakespearian enthusiast, was in the front-row with his family, looking as if he knew all about the tragedy, and wagging his head as one who should say, "I am pleased to see the delight it affords you, my friends, but I have been steeped in it for many years." Gerald Hardinge

was right in his anticipation of the presence of the military. The officers were there in force, from the colonel to the youngest subaltern, and being one and all in severe evening dress, gave quite an aristocratic appearance to that portion of the dress-circle which they filled. So Sam Cave said at least, and Sam Cave ought to have known, having twice attended the performances of Madame Malibran in London, and being the only person within many miles who was supposed to know what Fop's Alley was, or what it meant.

The good townspeople, too, most of whom had heard from Miss Cave of her lodger's quiet life, and of the way in which she supported her younger sister, made a point of attending in crowds, and of cheering the heroine of the evening to the echo. These cheers she really deserved, as, always conscientious and painstaking, she had never so thoroughly identified herself with any character, never so sunk her own individuality in the part to be assumed, as on this occasion. The extra excitement and fatigue, indeed, had so far prostrated her, that at the conclusion of the performance, Miss Cave, who had been checking the accounts in the front of the house, ran round to the stage-door, and seeing Gerald Hardinge in waiting on Miss Pierrepoint, bade him take her home at once, leave her at the door, and not attempt to talk to her that night, and the worthy soul added to Madge, "You will not see me, my dear, until to-morrow morning, or hear anything from me about it; though I can tell you that owing to Sam's having packed them together like herrings, we have got more money than I can ever recollect into the house, and the result will be better than I told you; I will come up to your room the first thing to-morrow morning with the

amount. And now, Mr. Hardinge, take her off directly."

The next morning, when Miss Pierrepont awoke, she found that the kind old lady had already been to her room, for lying on her pillow was a small white paper parcel containing the items of the account jotted down in Miss Cave's neat, though now tremulous handwriting, and more than forty-eight pounds in notes, gold, and silver.

Forty-eight pounds! Madge counted it over two or three times and was delighted, for that was considerably more than she had led Philip to expect. How pleased he will be! Perhaps he will be able to spare her a little of it; she would like to make old Miss Cave a present, and some acknowledgment to two or three others, who had put themselves to extra trouble and inconvenience on her account, and who could little spare the time they had given up. Rose, too, wanted a new gown sadly; Madge knew the girl was ashamed of her dress, though she never complained. But she had refused to go out walking very often lately, except in the evening dusk, and Madge was sure that was the reason. As Madge was in the midst of this wonderment, there came a knock at the door, and Miss Cave entered the room.

"That's a good girl," said the old lady, looking not without admiration at the pretty figure before her, with its long brown hair floating over its shoulders; "I thought you would not be foolish enough to get up just yet after all your fatigue, so I have brought you a letter which has just been left by the postman. There it is," she continued, laying it on the bed, "a letter with the London postmark and a smart seal; I only hope it is not from any London manager, who has heard of you and wants to offer you an engagement. Perhaps it's from Mr. Boscawen. I sent him one of your circulars, but I heard afterwards he had gone to London."

"No," said Madge, "it isn't from a manager, and it isn't from Mr. Boscawen. It is not a very important communication. How very good of you, dear Miss Cave, to take so much trouble about me, and to get me all this money." She looked up and tried to smile, but the light had died out of her eyes, and her lips trembled.

"No thanks at all, my dear," said the old lady; "it was your own talent and niceness that drew the money, and all I had to do was to collect it, and make it up for you. Now, if you don't want to sleep

any more, I will make you a nice cup of tea, and bring it up to you before you dress."

So soon as she was left alone, Madge took up the letter and read it again.

"What can it mean?" she said to herself. "Philip knows I would send him the money at once and safely. I have done so before; it cannot be for that, then, that he is coming! There must be something important that brings him here so soon again! It's over-fatigue only I suppose, but I am horribly low and down this morning, and feel as if something evil were going to happen."

All day long the same wonder beset her. What could it be? And the apparent importance of it grew as she thought it over.

One thing was certain, she must meet him that night. There would be a difficulty, but that must be overcome. Gerald Hardinge would want to see her of course. Now and then, once a week, perhaps, he was in the habit of coming in when he had seen her home from the theatre, and partaking of their frugal supper with her sister and herself, a small but pleasant meal, to which, on such occasions, he always insisted on contributing.

He would want to come that night doubtless. There were numerous incidents of the benefit to be talked over; she had scarcely seen him since, and he would doubtless propose himself as a visitor that night. It could not be. She must go and meet Philip, that was imperative; she must devise some story which would satisfy Gerald, and in order to do that, Rose must be taken into her confidence.

That last necessity was very unpleasant to Madge Pierrepont. In the course of her career, straight as she endeavoured to keep it, she had to undergo various little shifts and privations, to pass through various phases of life, not necessarily base or ignoble in themselves, but rendered so by their connexions and surroundings. But all these were with scrupulous care hidden from the knowledge of her younger sister. Madge Pierrepont was not acquainted with the mysteries of the partnership; she had had experience of the world, but was driven by the tale of the partnership to be absolutely necessary to her in her profession, and of the extortions of the usurer—not unfrequently some other member of the company—for salary lent to her in advance.

But Rose knew nothing of all these things. She was but a child, Madge said,

and it was desirable that she should be kept as long as possible in ignorance of all the bad ways of this weary work-a-day world. She had her French lessons to do, with her music, and then there was her painting, in which she took such interest, and in which Gerald Hardinge so kindly helped her. Let her go on with this until the time came when she must struggle for herself; but until that time came, let the meanness and the shifts of hard-grinding poverty be kept from her.

Now, however, she must be taken into confidence, so far at least as to throw dust in the eyes of Gerald Hardinge and Miss Cave, both of whom would be curious as to Madge's proceedings. Madge recognised this, and thought out her plan of action while she dressed herself, and when she crossed over into her little sitting-room, she was perfectly prepared with it.

Rose was delighted to see Madge, and ran up and kissed her, and congratulated her on the success of the benefit. Rose had never seen Madge look so gloriously, or play so splendidly, as she had done on the previous night, and Miss Cave had told her that Madge had made a lot of money, and that was good hearing, for they wanted it badly enough, goodness knows. "Just look at my rags," said Rose in parenthesis, holding up her arm and showing where the poor cheap stuff had undeniably frayed away; and Madge must be awfully tired, mustn't she—good thing she only played in the first piece that evening—and she must come home directly after and go to bed, and the next day was Sunday, when she could take a long rest, and they could talk over all that was to be done.

There was Madge's chance. She replied affectionately and sweetly to all her sister's congratulations, and then she added, "I was very tired, dear, but I have had a good long sleep, and I cannot come home early to-night as you suggest, because I have to go out for an hour or two on a matter of business."

Rose's face flushed instantly. "Going out, Madge, what again? You were out—when was it?—Monday night, the night of the— How very strange!"

"How very strange!" said Rose, as if she were speaking to herself. "How very strange!" she repeated, however strange you may think it, my dear Rose," said Madge, quietly.

"Well, but——"

"Be good enough to attend to me; I have business which calls me out to-night. It is probable that when Gerald Hardinge does

not find me in the theatre, he will come on here."

"Oh, then your business does not concern Gerald Hardinge?"

"My business concerns myself—and you—and no one else." And Madge's cheek burned as she uttered the lie.

"Oh, I only thought—— What then?" said Rose, inconsequently, but much less acrimoniously than before.

"Well, if Gerald comes on here, you must tell him that I have gone to bed thoroughly tired out, but I will see him in the morning."

"Oh, Madge! but suppose he sees Miss Cave?"

"If Miss Cave comes home before Gerald arrives, you must tell her the same story; if she comes after him, you will tell her that I have gone to Mrs. Probus's, who wanted especially to see me, and that I shall not be late."

"But, Madge, won't it——"

"Do as I tell you, Rose, and don't ask any questions! Depend upon it that what I am going to do is both for your interest and mine."

And Rose, who took a very different view of the affair when she found that Mr. Gerald Hardinge was not mixed up with her sister's proceedings, promised compliance, and said no more.

It was dull work that night at the theatre; *Romeo and Juliet* was played again, "in consequence of its enormous attraction;" but no one who had been present on the previous night would have recognised the performance. Reaction was evident everywhere, even down to the two "supers," and Mrs. Gonnop, who played the nurse. The house was not one-third full, and these persons who were present seemed bored and dissatisfied. The curtain was no sooner down than Madge Pierpoint ran to her dressing-room, threw a large cloak over her stage-dress, dashed some water over her face, twisted up her hair, put on her bonnet, and sallied forth. She saw nothing of either Miss Cave or Gerald Hardinge, but turned rapidly into the street, and along the road up which we have before tracked her footsteps.

was bright and clear, and every object in the landscape standing out square and closely defined against her light. Mellowed and softened by her rays, the Dampington turnpike threw a shadow, strange, foreign,

and kiosk-like over the road into the little lane, the moonbeams penetrated through interlacing trees, working a wavy arabesque pattern on the green hedgerows, and chequering the winding path with light and shade.

This time Madge was not the first to arrive. As she turned into the lane, a figure arose from the bank, against which it had been lying, and advanced to meet her. It was her husband.

"You're late," was his genial greeting.

"I came away as soon as I could, Philip," she replied; "didn't even stop to change my dress—look here." And she opened her cloak, showing Juliet's white robe underneath.

"By Jove," he said glancing at her, "there's purity! What is it, a Druidical priest's, or a virgin of the sun?"

She flushed angrily for a moment, but recovered herself directly, then said with a short laugh, "You would rather it were Iago's doublet, I suppose, and that I could not merely give you his counsel, 'put money in thy purse,' but act upon the advice. However, I can do that as it happens without the doublet. This is for you," and she placed a small packet in his hand.

"What is this?" he exclaimed, as he took it. "Oh, yes, the benefit, I forgot all about it! How much is there here?"

"Forty-eight pounds, Philip," she cried, laying her hand upon his shoulder, and looking up into his face. "Isn't it good?"

"Might have been worse," he said, quietly slipping the money into his pocket. "Well, and how did it go off, and all that sort of thing?"

"I scarcely know what you mean by all that sort of thing," said Madge; "the house was very full, as you will know by the contents of your waistcoat-pocket."

"Yes, but you? Did you tip 'em the word in grand style? Did you let 'em have it from the shoulder?"

"I spoke the text of the part, so that I conclude that I did tip them the word. I don't understand your delicate allusion to the shoulder."

"There, don't be cross, Madge," said Philip Vane, putting his arm round her; "I know I am always talking slang, but that's the fault of the people I live with; I've no doubt you acted splendidly and got plenty of applause."

"Old Mr. Probus wrote me a note this morning, declaring he had never seen Juliet better played, and he recollects Miss O'Neill."

"Dear old Probus," said Philip Vane. "What will he take to drink? Seriously though, I am delighted to hear it. Well, and what have you got to say to me?"

"I thought it was to say something to me that you came down here," said Madge; "for my part I have not got much to say. Oh, yes, Philip, one thing I want you to do, if you can, to spare me a little of that money."

"Oh," said Major Vane, "a little of that money, eh?"

"A very little will do, Philip: there are two or three things that I absolutely must have in my theatrical wardrobe, and poor Rose has scarcely a gown to her back."

"It seems to me a devilish hard thing that we should have to provide poor Rose's gowns out of our income," said the major; "however, of course she can't be allowed to disgrace the family. Let me see," he added, taking the packet from his pocket. "What did you say the figure was?"

"Forty-eight pounds," said Madge.

"Forty-eight. Five, ten, fifteen, ah, very neatly made up, forty-five in notes and three in gold. Well, Madge, I will see if I can spare you the three pounds, though I must confess that just now it is deuced inconvenient."

Madge took the three sovereigns without a word. The devils of passion and wounded pride were struggling within her, and she dare not trust herself to open her lips.

"And, by the way," continued Philip Vane, "it was upon the very subject of money that I have come down to talk to you. You know all this applause and all these compliments from old Potbus, or whatever his name is, are very well in their way, but there is nothing substantial about them. The only way to appreciate a thing is by its money value, and the salary you are earning just now is an uncommonly small one."

"When you say 'appreciate a thing,' you mean appreciate me by my money value, I suppose," said Madge, "and that to you is small. You must permit me to say, however, that you knew what it was when you condescended to accept it; and that it has not deteriorated since."

"Yes," said Philip Vane, impatiently, "all right! Just come off the high ropes, will you, and let's talk this thing through quietly, and in a business-like way. Our interests are the same, or ought to be."

"Yes," said Madge, bitterly, "'or ought to be'!"

"Now, if I were not the best-tempered man in the world, you really would put me out by your interruption! Our interests are the same, and what is good for you is good for me. Now I have an idea, which, if I can only carry it out, will improve both your position and our interests."

"Not by my going to London, Philip; not by my attempting to play in burlesque, and sing songs. Oh, for goodness sake, don't ask me to do it! It would not be of the smallest use either; I should make a dead, flat failure of it, and lose the little fame I have gained in my present humble way."

"My good girl, I am not going to do anything of the sort. I would not dream of inflicting upon you such a degradation! On the contrary, what I have to propose entirely arises from the fact that you are what you are, a leading actress, and not one of those jiggish jades."

"Do you mean to say you have heard of an opening for me in my own line in London, Philip?" cried Madge, eagerly.

"Well, no, not in London exactly," said Major Vane.

"Liverpool or Manchester?" she asked.

"No, wrong again; a little further off. The fact is, that Mr. Wuff, whose name I dare say you have heard, a man who has been mixed up in theatrical matters for the last hundred years, I believe, has been organising a troupe to go out under his supervision to America, Australia, and other places of that kind, on a three years' tour. He has made his arrangements with the best ballet people and that sort of thing, and he wants some one for a star actress, and I have come down to propose that you should go."

Madge had been listening open-eyed and open-mouthed. When he ceased, she was silent for a moment, then her first words were, "But what of Rose?"

"Oh, damn it," cried Major Vane, "must she go too?"

"She must, of course. How could I leave her, with whom could I leave her? Of course she must go!"

"Well," said Major Vane, after a moment's reflection, "I dare say that could be managed." Wuff will make her play pages' parts, or turn her into something useful, he thought to himself.

"Three years," said Madge, reflectively; "it's a long time to be away. Do you think you could manage to live without seeing London, and London acquaintances, and London ways, for three years, Philip?"

"No," said that gentleman, candidly, "I am certain I could not."

"But you will have to, if we accept this offer?" said Madge.

"Eh?" cried Major Vane, in a loud and startled tone; "you don't imagine that I am going away to play a leading lady too, do you?"

"Do you mean to say that you are not going, Philip?"

"I have not the remotest intention of doing anything of the sort; my business engagements here, my good girl, would prevent me."

"Oh," said Madge, quietly, "your proposition, then, relates to me alone?"

"Exactly!"

"You don't expect me to give you an answer here, and at once, I suppose?"

"Well, I did, as I rather want to get back to London."

"It is impossible! It is a matter which will take serious reflection. If you are so pressed you had better go; I will write to you my decision."

"No," said Philip Vane, promptly, "that won't do; you must make up your mind, please, within the next twelve hours," looking at his watch. "It is now eleven o'clock; at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning I will be here again, and you will be good enough to meet me. Consider it thoroughly, and don't act upon impulse; your reply may have a greater influence on your future than you are at present aware of. Now, good-night."

He did not offer to embrace her, he did not even approach her; but kissed the tips of his fingers airily, and walked off.

Madge, standing in exactly the same position, heard the rumble of the departing wheels of the cab which, as before, he had left at the bottom of the lane; then, with sad face and rebellious heart, she made the best of her way towards what she called her home.

DEBATING DOWN EAST.

To a very frank-hearted, independent-minded population of twenty-five hundred or so, Cranberry Centre is the centre of the world. True enough, it is to the rest of the world much like the "gem of purest ray serene," lying as it does in a deep, and for the most part unfathomed forest ocean, in northern New England. The farmers of Cranberry Centre would perhaps forgive a scholarly man (as they might call him) an ignorance of Carthage; but if he had never heard of Cranberry

Centre, he would be scouted as a quack. New York is so many miles from Cranberry, not vice versa. Mighty political issues hang on the decision of the Cranberrians; the little nook of glaringly white houses heaves in earthquake throes at the recurrence of a political crisis. There is no preacher, doctor, and la'yer like the Cranberry preacher, doctor, and la'yer. You'll not find a farm in Yankeeland like Squire Pickering's. There's an old church at Cranberry, just at the brow of the hill, which is certainly the oldest in "our parts." There's a mill which turns out the biggest and evenest planks; and most of the Cranberry boys, going forth from this nursery of greatness, work marvels in the outlying world beyond. One has been vice-president of these United States; another gets fifteen thousand dollars a year as a preacher in "York."

To the outer barbarian Cranberry Centre is a bright, bustling, exquisitely situated, inviting, sunshiny New England village. There are several minor satellite Cranberrys round about, such as East, West, and South Cranberry, and Cranberry Corner; but this you will perceive at once, even if you failed to espy the sign-board at the cross-roads, is indisputably the centre. Here is the town-hall, a great architectural triumph, opened with high ceremony seven years ago, a wooden imitation (on a modest scale) of the Parthenon. Here are the three churches, Baptist, Congregationalist, Methodist, whereof two have needle spires, pointing skyward, and the other a squat square tower. Here, round the open common, is the shop where the village Jack-of-all-trades dispenses with impartial hand candles, calicoes, and pickaxes; the doctor's and the lawyer's office; the village bank; the village tavern; the academy; and Squire Pickering's old ancestral wooden mansion. Just a few steps below the common there is factory music the livelong day. The natives show you proudly the little mill, driven by water-power, where certain faney children's toys are turned out, including base-ball bats and croquet sets.

There is everywhere cheery healthiness and vigour. The air is dry, the village street high, open, and clean, the people brown, muscular, and active. Stage-coaches still come and go; there is an old lady in Cranberry (in truth, one of its wonders) who never yet rode by rail, or saw an engine; and Silas Crow, octogenarian, who went by rail to Boston once, "twenty-five year ago, sir," declares, by every rustic

deity ("by Gosh" and "by Jiminy"), "that he'd never go agin, it shuk him up so."

Speaking of the stage-coach touches nearly, though you mightn't guess it, our subject. You would hardly look, for the founder of a debating club, to a stage-coachman. Nevertheless, the Cranberry Debating Club, christened the "Washingtonian Union," was the inspiration of Hephiah Mann, who had for three years driven the Cranberry coach. Hephiah had missed his peculiar tide to fortune. His aunt Hetty said that he was "a nat'ral born o-ra-tor," and so he was. He drove by day, he "orated" by night. Once he visited a debating society's meeting at the Lyceum in Doefield, the nearest town, and daily destination of the coach. That fired his ambition. Should Cranberry Centre lag behind Doefield? Never. Cranberry should debate as well as its neighbours. So, sitting at eventide in the tavern porch, where were also Squire Pickering (in his shirt-sleeves), the Reverend Elkanah Pike (reading the news), Doctor Jerryly (wiping his spectacles), and Hobbs, the landlord (smoking a long clay), he broached his new-hatched plan. He represented to the assembled dignitaries that Doefield had no superiority in talent, and no more right, in fact, to have such a club, than Cranberry. It need not be a dry debating club; we might improve upon the model by introducing apt dialogue, singing, occasional addresses, and so on. It would be an excellent plan to gather the village folks together on winter evenings; would improve the mind, as well as afford innocent and popular recreation. The seed fell on genial soil. The reverend pastor said it was a capital idea. Doctor Jerryly would go for it, provided they'd make a rule not to talk politics. Squire Pickering, as "selectman," readily promised the use of the town-hall. Hobbs, the landlord, wondered if they couldn't add a little dancin', "after the speakin' was threw?"

It needed no haranguing from the oratorical Hephiah to persuade the young men to enter into his idea heart and soul; and as for the young women they took to it at once, headed by Addie Dunster, who was a new-fangled village heroine, a "sweet girl graduate with golden hair," who had been to that university out West which receives maidens, and had returned thence Demoiselle of Arts.

Start a new "notion" in a Yankee village, and everybody is soon agog with it. There is not, as in older countries, a clinging to

old ways and precedents. Novelty is, indeed, almost too much worshipped in America, for its own sake. The people, whether in town or country, are ever experimenting, trying new things. This starting of a debating society was quite an event in Cranberry Centre. The old ladies gossiped about it over their twilight tea. The farmers joked about it as they went afield. The little boys looked on the big boys with envy, for the big boys were going to immortalise themselves as orators before the whole village. The Reverend Elkanah Pike rejoiced in the plan, as one ingeniously mingling profit with the pleasures of his flock.

So one Sunday evening, when the matter was ripe, the good pastor, at a meeting in the vestry, announced that there would be a gathering of all such as wished to become members of the club, at his house, on the following evening. What a merry meeting it was! The elders, declining to take any other part than that of approving patrons, the proceedings were conducted by the younger men. Hephiah Mann was, of course, the hero of the moment. The other young men, who were to be the moving spirits of the club, were mostly broad, brawny fellows, with knotty hands, and honest, open faces, full of lusty health, and, although you might have picked flaws in their grammar, no dullards either in intelligence or skill in speaking. Every one had been trained in the free village school, and could quote you Milton and Jefferson as glibly as can, on occasion, the senators in congress. In politics it would have been hard to disconcert them; and with religious topics they were scarcely less conversant.

After some urging, Hephiah, who had privately conveyed a hint to almost every one in the room that he had a set of regulations written out, in his pocket, was induced to take a position at the parson's centre table, and read them out. He had been to the Doefield Lyceum secretary, and got the model; and had for many nights employed his brain and pen, working up the important document now to be read.

This society shall be called the "Washingtonian Union;" first, out of respect to the father of his country, whom we must always honour; secondly, because "in union there is strength."

Anybody can belong who wants to, who is twenty years old, and who'll pay the fees. Everybody who belongs must speak

when called on by the president, and also read essays. A penalty of a quarter of a dollar will have to be paid by anybody who refuses to perform this duty.

The officers shall consist of a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, and a committee to get up subjects and arrange the debates, all to be elected every year. The fees shall be one dollar a year, to pay for lights, fuel, and Pompey for sweeping out.

The meetings shall be held every Friday night. Punctual attendance is earnestly requested.

Nobody can wear their hats at the meetings, nor scrape the floor with their feet. Peanuts are prohibited, also tobacco chewing. Disorderly folks will be expelled. Ladies can be members of the Union, and may be called upon, if so, to read essays. What their punishment shall be for not reading when called upon, the president for the time being must decide.

Members may be elected by a majority of the votes cast. A quorum shall consist of six members.

The motto is, "The Union. It must and shall be preserved."

Thus duly established, the Washingtonian Union prospered. All the great questions of the day, whether metaphysical or agricultural, literary or political, speculative or practical, were duly discussed.

On one occasion I happened to be sojourning at Cranberry Centre; and, as luck would have it, my first evening there was the night of a great debate at the Union. Mine host was very particular to inform me of the fact, and of the exact time when the debate was to begin. It was a blustering cold winter's night. The wind blew in whirlpool gales across the hills, and the snow, as it thickly descended, gathered in great clouds near the earth, and then, as if changing its mind, and intent on getting up into the sky again, whirled off and up in headlong gusts. The forests were a very Bedlam of maniac Boreases, shrieking and tearing among the branches. Yet the village street was far from dismal. The rows of white dwellings shed out bright rays from their windows upon the paths; and forth from the porches came laughing, hastening groups, making merry with the storm, and caring nothing for its fury. The majestic Parthenon porch of the town-hall loomed grandly if dimly (perhaps the more grandly because dimly) through the quivering and ever-changing

gauze of snow; and three or four large lanterns, hung to its pillars, sent out a hospitable invitation to all to enter. Just within the door was a group of newcomers, eagerly discussing the evening's arrangements, the while stamping the snow from their feet, unwinding the complicated spirals of shawls, and shaking down to a becoming fold the somewhat crumpled and disordered skirts. Here were old as well as young; the good pastor, smiling from behind his spectacles; tough old farmers, with a smell of hay about them; the inevitable little circle of maidens of uncertain age, some trying to look youthful, and others starched, sedate, and duly critical; the speakers rather fidgety and absent-minded, and the speakers' sweet-hearts looking half proud and half anxious; some small boys and little girls, who enjoyed the Union as a novelty, and as a chance to go out, and to "sit up" after bedtime.

Up in the hall, which was on the first floor, the plain deal benches had been arranged in a semicircle; the platform was duly supplied with a table, a sofa (of black hair-cloth) for the president, and a pine chair for the secretary. It was a primitive-looking place enough. The only adornment was a full-length portrait of General Washington on his charger, and looking very determined and patriotic, over the president's sofa. Gas was an unknown luxury; the hall was lighted with kerosine lamps along the walls.

The audience were a long time drifting in, singly and in shoals, chatting and excited. An elderly man in grey remarked to me that "the hull (whole) village must be there, he guessed." Finally, in bustled, with great ado, a sharp-visaged little man, passing his hand rapidly up through his hair, and evidently encouraging himself to appear self-possessed and unconcerned, and mounted the steps to the platform. "That's Squire Sweetin', the la'yer," explained the elderly man in grey. "He's the president."

The president brought his eyes gradually round upon the audience, as if to break the shock which an abrupt facing of them would produce; drew out of his pocket an interminably long yellow-and-red handkerchief, as if he were about to perform a wizard's trick with it, and were on the point of saying, "Ladies and gentlemen, you see the eggs are not here," blew his nose with great energy, and hemmed loudly twice.

That the Union was not a mere dry de-

bating club, the reader will perceive from what followed. The meeting having been called to order, the president, looking seriously toward one corner of the room, asked "if the young ladies were ready to favour us with a song?" There was at once a rustling and turning of leaves in the corner, where, round an immense, lumbering air-tight stove, was a bevy of village lasses of various ages; near them, against the wall, was a piano, whose chords a young woman with long shiny curls was trying. Presently two of the group, Miss Lois Sparks and Miss Adeltha Pickering, both of whom were on the sedate side of thirty, stood a little forward, and mingled their voices in

We are—two forest—nymphs—who—dwell
In the depths—of the woodland—sha—ade,

their faces growing very red, and their arms very nervous. The chorus was very merrily joined in all over the hall, and this part of the entertainment lasted through five sprightly verses.

Then we had a recitation, by a very dark young man, with a very black moustache and a very blue necktie—a "college fellar," as the natives called him—of the final speech of Othello. To make the Moor's dying eloquence more impressive, the college fellar had wrapped his sweet-heart's waterproof cloak in Roman folds about his shoulder, wore a visorless cap on his head, and used, as the implement of self-destruction, a farmer's big jack-knife belonging to the village carpenter. When he came to "I took—by the throat—the circumcis-ed dog, and—smote him—thus!" and when he stabbed himself, with terrific aim (slitting the waterproof), and when he fell, and wriggled on the platform, to the great discomfort of the president, the hall shook with applause, and Miss Briggs whispered to Miss Wiggs that "she never saw anything so perfectly splendid in all her life!"

The golden-haired advocate of woman suffrage, Miss Addie Dunster, aged nineteen, next appeared upon the platform, and read an essay upon the Mother of the Gracchi, which was so full of poetical quotations, and had so many superlative expressions, and was read, withal, in so pleasant a voice, and with such an air of graceful shyness, that the performance quite won the hearts of the rustic audience, and almost eclipsed the triumph of the tragic youth.

You see that the Union was really much more than a debating club. Nevertheless, Hamlet was not omitted from the play.

After another song, the bustling little president announced that the debate was next in order, and that the subject for the evening was, "Man—has he physically, mentally, and morally improved within the past century, as illustrated by the people of Cranberry Centre, and in the growth of our town?"

The first speaker was the distinguished founder of the club, Hephiah Mann, coach-driver. You should have seen the painful primness with which he had got himself up for the occasion. At least half a bottle of Doctor Harrison's hyperion hair-oil must have been represented by the pasted condition of his thick red locks, which were parted behind, and fairly plastered to the sides of his face. He wore his "Sunday-go-to-meetin'" suit of black alpaca coat and waistcoat and grey homespun trousers; his cravat was yellow with black spots, and reached across over the lapels of his coat, and he wore an imitation rosebud in his button-hole. He got up with great composure, and went into his subject with Yankee directness and vigour.

He didn't believe man had degenerated in either respect, but had improved. He didn't know so much, though, about the physical improvement. "The folks who lived a hundred years ago," said he, "didn't eat so much pastry as they do now-a-days. Pastry ain't good. It disturbs your digestion. Then there's pork. Who'll tell me that pork ain't bad? It'll do in winter, when we want more fat stuff; but in summer, pork is pison—deny it who can! Wheat ought to be ground and eat, bran and all, oughtn't it, now?" For which reasons Hephiah, on the whole, decided that man, as represented by the Cranberrians, had physically degenerated, but not morally or mentally.

He sat down amid great applause, after a thrilling peroration about "our forefathers, who fit in the revolution of liberty," and was succeeded by Zenas Slader, a tall, thoughtful-looking youth, with bushy hair and hatchet face, whose clothes hung somewhat too loosely about him, and whose ~~short song, or rather speech, as he made his way to the front.~~ There arrived, he assumed a somewhat belligerent attitude, and, in the travail of his thought, frowned upon his auditors. Zenas had been teaching school for a year or two, and was the lawyer's clerk and destined partner, and felt, it is needless to add, great self-confidence.

"What is't," he burst out suddenly, "'s made us grow so, if we ain't improved? Look at the factory down the road—was that there a century ago? No! Look at them churches—when was they built, I sh'd like t'know? Well, I do know, and so do you—three on 'em put up within three years. Why, what was this village a hundred years ago? I've heard tell that there was only a hundred folks here in revolution times. Go out into the road and look at the boys. Do they act as bad's they used to? The old folks tell us how the boys and gals used to 'cut up' when they were young. They don't 'cut up' so now, do they? Wall, then. Of course we ain't perfect—of course we ain't. But I was readin' the other day how Miles Standish, the old Puritan soldier, used to swear like a good un, and yet was a holy man; and Gen'ral Ethan Allen, he used to swear; and they do say Gen'ral Washington swore now and then. Do any of our first men swear neow? Does Squire Pickering swear? Does La'yer Sweetin' swear? Does Parson Pike swear? No, they don't. Wall, then. I agree with friend Hephiah—pork ain't good, and pastry certainly ain't good. But we ain't so bad off, even if they ain't, be we now?" With which crushing argumentum ad hominem, Zenas sat down in triumph.

Several of the other village hopefuls pursued the debate with great vigour, much after the style of the two I have sketched, often eliciting laughter and applause by their homely humour and their patriotic rhapsodies. When the speaking was finished, the president put the subject to the audience to vote upon it; whereat the optimist villagers almost unanimously decided that man, as exemplified in Cranberry Centre, had certainly progressed in the triple advantages of physical, moral, and mental well-being.

But even yet the entertainment of the evening was not concluded. The debate over, of a sudden the maidens came bustling through the audience, bearing baskets, and offering refreshments to each and all. ~~nuts and apple turnovers,~~ biscuits, tartlets and apples; while the youths brought cider and ginger-beer, homemade, which they dispensed in tin cups brought for the occasion. Then, in a moment, the rows of benches were whirled round and packed closely against the walls, leaving a large clear space in the middle of the hall. Before any one knew were Hephiah had disappeared to, he suddenly

showed his shining locks in the little square gallery over the door; and before any one could guess what he was up there for, he struck up a lively air on his fiddle. For Hephiah was a universal genius, and could handle a fiddle-bow, a knotty argument in politics or morals, and the reins of a team, with equal ease and éclat. The men led out their partners, and anon the town-hall fairly shook with the thumps of the dancers, dancing the ancient yet ever exciting Virginia Reel. Even the elderly gentleman who had such a terror of steam locomotion, and the sedate Squire Pickering, joined in the sport; while the younger dancers were made hilarious, as well by watching the old folks gallivant down the line as by the jolliness of the dancing itself.

It was midnight ere they could make up their minds to bundle up for the homeward jaunt. The snow was still whirling and careering wildly over street and houses, encircling the steeples with dissolving wreaths, and heaping in drifts against the knolls. But that made the home-going all the merrier, for the couples clung to each other all the tighter, and it was royal fun to fight, with one's sweetheart, against gust and drift.

ALI BABA IN GERMANY.

"Possibly you recollect," observed Rupert, lying down his elaborately adorned meerschbaum, and staring at the flimsy mountain of willow shavings that filled his fireless grate, "possibly you may recollect that when you were here some weeks ago, I told you a tale about a Three-eyed Man,* the termination of which strongly resembled that of the Forty Thieves?"

"I remember the tale perfectly," answered Adolphus. "It came, you said, from Cyprus, and the two stories coincided in the termination only, being, in all other respects, essentially different."

"Good!" exclaimed Rupert. "Well, I have now discovered a legend which is essentially the same story as the Forty Thieves, with this exception, that of the termination, to which we formerly directed our attention, not a trace is to be found."

"Does the legend come from Cyprus, or anywhere thereabouts?" asked Adolphus.

"No," was the reply. "It comes from Prussia, from the principality of Halberstadt, near Magdeburg, and refers to a

castle, the ruins of which are still to be seen. The Dammburg, as it is called, was most conveniently situated for predatory purposes; and the robbers, by whom it was tenanted, were in the habit of sallying forth into the high road from Leipzig to Brunswick, and killing and murdering everybody of sufficient importance to render such operations lucrative. They had at their disposal subterranean vaults in which to conceal their ill-gotten treasure, and wells into which they flung the corpses of their victims. Ultimately the robbers of the Dammburg were put down as a nuisance by the neighbouring princes, but the belief is current that their treasures are still heaped up in the vaults. Now, once upon a time, a poor woodcutter——"

"The Ali Baba of the story," interrupted Adolphus. "Did he flourish before the robbers were put down, or afterwards?"

"We can discuss that point presently," remarked Rupert. "While this woodcutter was felling a tree behind the ruins, he saw a monk gliding through the forest, and, judging that something interesting was afoot, concealed himself, and watched. The monk disappeared among the rocks, but was soon followed on tip-toe by the woodcutter, who saw him stop at a little door, which had never been noticed by any of the villagers in the neighbourhood. At this he knocked softly, crying at the same time, 'Open, little door,' and his order was at once obeyed."

"What, no sesame!" exclaimed Adolphus, "no millet! no barley! merely the door addressed in its own proper person! It seems to me that the German tale is more primitive than the Arabian."

"When the monk had entered, the woodman heard the words 'Close, little door,' and this order was obeyed like the other. Though he trembled from head to foot, the woodman was determined to visit the spot on some future occasion, and accordingly he marked the path leading to the door with branches and stones. Never was man's mind in a more disturbed state. Glad to get home, he was no sooner there than he wished himself back among the rocks, so anxious was he, and at the same time so afraid to try his hand with the little door. During the whole of the ensuing Saturday he fasted, and on Sunday, at nightfall, he proceeded to the fascinating spot, with a rosary in his hand. The door was in its proper place, and, shaking in his shoes, he stood before it. He thought it might be opened by the monk."

* See *THE YEAR ROUND*, New Series, vol. v., p. 516.

"Decidedly," said Adolphus, "there is a sensational colouring in the German tale which is not to be found in the other."

"No one appeared," proceeded Rupert, "consequently the woodcutter knelt down and prayed. Strengthened by the devout exercise, he gave a desperate knock at the door, at the same time saying, in a trembling whisper, 'Open, little door.' It opened at once, and a narrow, dimly-lit passage was revealed, which led to a spacious vault. 'Shut, little door,' was his involuntary exclamation."

"Involuntary as it was," remarked Adolphus, "it doubtless answered its purpose."

"Advancing into the vault," continued Rupert, "the woodcutter discovered open vessels filled with old coins and heavy ingots of gold. Sacred vessels used for divine service, and costly images of saints, were likewise in great abundance. The woodcutter crossed himself, and wished that he was a hundred miles off, but at the same time he recollected that he had a wife and eight children, and he did not like to go home empty-handed."

"I object to those eight children," cried Adolphus. "The number ought to be seven, according to all the laws of precedent."

"Then, as the children have nothing to do with the story, to seven they shall be reduced to suit your views," said Rupert. "Well, the woodman hastily took several handfuls of coin, and poured them into a sack, which he took down from a nail in the wall."

"It was very handsome on the part of the robbers to put it there," observed Adolphus.

"Nay, if that astonishes you," said Rupert, "what will you say when I tell you that, when the woodcutter had reached the door with his treasure, a human voice from the back of the cave cried, 'Come again.'"

"Now what was the motive of the invitation?" inquired Adolphus. "There was no immediate mischief intended, or the voice would have ordered him to stop where he was, and he would probably have come to grief. Neither was any particular good intended, or he would have been told where he could find another sack."

"You are too deep for me," retorted Rupert. "I can only say that the woodman made no answer, but left the cave as quickly as possible by the method already tested, and hurried to the nearest church, where he offered a tenth of his treasure for the benefit of the establishment, and another tenth for the benefit of the poor. A few more coins he expended in purchasing

clothes for his family. The bulk of his treasure he resolved to conceal in his cellar, but being anxious to have some faint notion of the extent of his wealth, and not being able to count, he asked his neighbour, a hard-fisted old corn-dealer, to lend him a peck measure, of course not telling him for what it was required."

"There is an old friend, Ali Baba's brother," murmured Adolphus.

"The old gentleman," proceeded Rupert, "enjoyed a reputation for cheating the poor, which he fully merited. He kept measures with chinks in them so large that, whenever they were used, some grains of corn were sure to fall for the benefit of the dealer. In one of these a coin stuck fast, which escaped the notice of the woodcutter, but was at once detected by the shrewd corn-dealer when the measure was returned. Waylaying the woodcutter in the forest, he extorted from him, by threats, the whole story of the hidden treasure. He then changed his tone, and promised that if the woodcutter could lead him to the newly-discovered source of wealth on the following Sunday, they should equally share the profits of the expedition. The woodcutter, who did not like the arrangement at all, expatiated largely on the perils of the vault; but the corn-dealer, far from being moved, scarcely listened to his neighbour's description of accumulated horrors."

"Well now, really," interposed Adolphus, "if the woodcutter adhered strictly to the truth, I don't see there was much to be frightened at. He had seen a monk, who unwittingly showed him the way, and never troubled him further; he had come to an obliging little door, which did whatever it was told; and when he had loaded himself with coin, an extremely polite voice had requested the honour of a second visit. I am afraid that his mendacity on this occasion was very great."

"I fear so too," responded Rupert. "Be that as it might, Sunday came round, and at sunrise, not at nightfall, did the neighbours proceed to the ruins of the Dumburg, the corn-dealer having across his shoulder a huge sack, which contained twenty others of smaller dimensions, and carrying with him a spade and a pick-axe. He was to enter the vault alone, and the woodcutter, remaining outside, was to receive the sacks as they were filled, and to hide them in the bushes till the entire operation was completed. In accordance with

this plan, the corn-dealer gave the prescribed orders to the little door, which opened and closed at his bidding, and was so highly stimulated by the aspect of the vast treasures around him that he at once dragged out his twenty sacks, laid them on the ground, and began to fill them without delay. Presently, however, a huge black dog, with fiery eyes, slowly emerged from the depths of the cavern, and laid himself successively on every one of the filled sacks. 'Hence, miser!' growled the dog; and the miser made the best of his way to quit the cavern, but so completely was he befogged by terror that instead of saying, 'Open, little door,' he kept on bawling, 'Shut, little door,' at the top of his voice; and the door, already closed, remained in that condition."

"A new proof," almost shrieked Adolphus, "that the German version of the story is older than the Arabian. The conduct of the miser is almost beyond the limits of human nature. What amount of terror could make a man, whose house was on fire, throw up his window and shout 'Water,' or how could a woman, whose husband was beating her to death, cry out 'All right,' instead of 'Murder?' Could any idiocy, permanent or temporary, make a person ask for a door to be shut when he wished for it to be open? Turn to the Arabian story, and, as far as human agency is concerned, you will find that the laws of probability are respected. The mention of the grain 'sesame' has no apparent connexion with the opening or closing of doors. Cassim Baba had merely learned the word for the occasion, and terror might easily make him forget it, and substitute the name of some other and more familiar grain. In my opinion the author of the Arabian story has seen and corrected the absurdity to which I refer."

"I appreciate your reasoning perfectly," said Rupert, after a pause. "We will, if you please, in our further comparison of legends, lay it down as a canon, that when two stories are precisely identical in substance, the one that is least absurd shall be deemed the more recent. Of course you will be prepared to hear some wisacre object that the Arabian Nights must be more ancient than tales about the corn-dealer and peasant of Halberstadt."

"Such objections are naught, as you will admit," rejoined Adolphus. "The story is only connected by accident with the Dumburg, unless, indeed, it was told on the spot by old German contemporaries of

Tacitus, the monk having taken the place of some pagan priest. Whittington's Cat, as you are aware, appears in one of Grimm's popular tales, and it would be indeed presumption to suppose that it was first fathered within the sound of Bow bells. But, I beg your pardon, the story stands still."

"For a long time," resumed Rupert, "the woodcutter, with beating heart, remained outside. As he approached the door he heard something like a groan, and something like a howl, and then all was silent. After telling his beads with quiet devotion, he knocked softly, and, as before, the door opened when duly commanded, but this time it revealed the bleeding corpse of the miser, stretched upon the sacks, while the casks filled with treasure sank deeper and deeper into the bowels of the earth."

"I see now, clearly enough," observed Adolphus, "that the incidents are supposed to occur after the extermination of the robbers. There is no horde ready to punish the woodcutter, but the treasures are in the custody of supernatural beings, who are there for a moral purpose, assisting honest poverty, and castigating avarice. The monk may be one of these, or he may be a favoured person like the woodcutter; for it is very obvious that the appropriation of the treasure to the service of the church is looked upon as meritorious."

"The robbers having been exterminated," remarked Rupert, "as you say, before the commencement of the story, all that relates to the disguise of the chief as a merchant, and the concealment of his band in jars, all, in short, of which we were reminded by the Three-eyed Man of Cyprus, naturally falls away from the German story—"

"No—no—why will you not be accurate, dear Rupert?" cried Adolphus. "It did not fall away from the German—in my opinion the oldest story—because it never was there. The incident of the pretended merchant equally well fits the Arabian and the Cyprian tales, which have otherwise nothing in common. On the other hand, the German and the Arabian tales have everything essential in common till we come to this particular incident. We have, therefore, in default of further information, a right to assume that the disguised merchant has been tacked to Ali Baba by a comparatively late hand, having had originally no connexion with him whatever. Probably, too, he was subjected to the same

liberty in the case of the Three-eyed Man, who so curiously blends Bluebeard and Polyphemus."

AT A WINDOW.

As oriel window looks
Over elms alive with rooks,
While afar,
Past glades where browse the deer,
There shines a silver mere,
Like a star.

And, while the sunlight flits,
In that wide window sits
One I know.
I see an easel stand,
But idle is that hand,
White as snow.

A dream is in those eyes,
That gaze on windy skies,
Cobalt blue:
A sad delicious dream,
With love its only theme,
Lost, though true.

Fain would the maiden trace
An forgotten face:
Ah, no, no!
Nought can its life recal;
Let the vain pencil fall:
Love means woe.

A TRIP TO THE LAND OF SCOTT.

PART II.

FROM the head of Loch Katrine is a ride of five miles to Inversnaid upon Loch Lomond. Until recently, those who wished to make this little excursion had to tramp it over moor and mountain, or hire ponies; but now there is a fair carriage-road, which adds to the comfort of the trip, though robbing it to some extent of its pristine wildness. We are still in the district of the Macgregors, and at the very headquarters of Rob Roy. At the foot of Loch Arklet, a small lake, which would attract admiration anywhere but in Scotland, where lakes are as plentiful as rainbows, stands Corrie Arklet, the place where the bold Rob found his shrewish bride, the fair Helen of Sir Walter's story. Here Loch Arklet pours out its surplus waters, forming a little river, which afterwards effecting a junction with the Snaid, discharges itself into Loch Lomond at Inversnaid in a series of cascades, which few travellers omit to visit. It was here that Wordsworth's admiration was extorted by the uncommon beauty of a barefooted Highland lassie, fourteen years of age, upon whose youthful charms he lavished all the wealth of his fancy in one of the most pleasing of his minor poems. This vision burst upon his sight in 1803, so that the lassie, if she still live, has turned fourscore. Yet such is

the magic of song that she remains a child in the poet's verse with all her surroundings as he described them, and will so remain, a little cabinet picture, as long as English literature endures, with

The lake, the bay, the waterfall,
And she, the spirit of them all.

At Inversnaid are the ruins of a fort, erected and garrisoned by the British government in 1713, with the avowed purpose of overawing and holding in check the turbulent Clan Gregor; and where, when he was a subaltern, the afterwards celebrated General Wolfe was for a short time stationed. The Dukes of Montrose, the hereditary foemen of the Macgregors, received an allowance from the Crown as governors of the Fort of Inversnaid, nearly to the close of the last century. From Inversnaid, access by steamer is easy to every part of Loch Lomond. The traveller can cross to Tarbet on the opposite shore, and after a walk of two miles or less, through shady avenues of luxuriant trees, arrive at Arroquhar, at the end of Loch Long, or he can proceed down to Rowardennan, by land or water, on the same side of the loch as Inversnaid, if he desires to climb to the noble peak of Ben Lomond. Or without landing he can steam down the whole length of the loch to Balloch, where the lake overflows into the placid stream of the Leven. Young travellers, who mostly have a fancy for climbing to mountain tops, generally make Rowardennan, whence the ascent is usually made, their first halting-place. And they cannot do better. I have been more than once at the top of Ben Nevis, of Ben MacDhui, of Goatfell, in Arran, and of a score of other great Bens in the Highlands, and can testify from experience that none so well repays the time expended and the toil incurred as Ben Lomond. The view from the top on a clear day is superb. Half of the length, and the whole breadth of Scotland, lie outstretched like a map beneath the feet. To the eastward may be seen the tall chimney of the St. Rollox Works, at Glasgow, without other trace of that great city; still further east, Arthur's Seat, overlooking Edinburgh, and further still the Bass Rock in the middle of the Firth of Forth. Westward rise the glorious peaks of Arran and the inner Hebrides, and further down the Firth of Clyde, Ailsa Craig, far larger and grander than the Bass. Southwards lies Loch Lomond, glittering like a sheet of gold, and studded with islands, and far beyond, the green sloping hills of

Benfrew, Ayr, and Lanark. Northwards the Grampians rear their magnificent heads and close the view with that massive rampart, beyond which, as Scotsmen boast, Cæsar and his legions were never able to penetrate. The northern side of the mountain, as seen from the summit by the traveller who has nerve enough to stand and look down, is precipitous; a sheer wall of fully fifteen hundred, or perhaps two thousand, feet. People of weak heads should lie flat down, if they would behold with perfect safety the awful crag, than which there is nothing in Great Britain more sublime, and which the Swiss Alps themselves cannot surpass. But it is not only in the clear sunshine that Ben Lomond is grandly beautiful. It was once my fortune to be on the top, with five or six companions, when the mountain became wholly enveloped in cloud, and when

Mist, thick mist poured on,
And so enwrapt us where we sat or stood,
That each to each loomed spectral and remote,
A thing of shadows in a shadowy land;
The mountain-top and twenty yards around
The only visible earth; ourselves alone
The earth's inhabitants.

Under such circumstances to move from one's place is perilous fool-hardihood. North, south, east, and west are all undistinguishable in the thick vapour; and even a few steps, if in the wrong direction, may pitch the rash adventurer head foremost into death and eternity. On this occasion we were all experienced climbers, and knew the risks we ran; so we sat still and told tales and sang songs; some of us smoked, and one was so far off, a dozen feet or so, that we could only make out where he was by the glowworm light of his cigar, showing faintly as if it were a mile distant. We had creature comforts along with us, which enabled us to pass the time without being benumbed by the icy mist that gathered on our clothes like hear-frost; and we found amusement, such as it was, by pelting an empty whisky-bottle which one of our company had stuck upon the top of the cairn (and on the top of every Highland Ben a cairn is sure to be found, to verify the fact that the spot in question is indubitably the highest), with such loose stones and pebbles as bestrewed the grey head of the mountain. It is only those who are very hard put to it for amusement, in long and weary hours, who can picture to themselves the enjoyment our party derived from this apparently trivial occupation. But let those laugh who win. We laughed and we won the relaxation we

sought. And when, after three hours, the mists began to roll away, and

the cloud dispersed,
And in full glory, at one burst,
Revealed a world—hill, valley, town,
Glittering in sunlight miles adown—
Rivers and lakes and highlands brown,

we felt more than repaid, by the sudden grandeur of the spectacle, for all the little sufferings we had undergone and the dangers we had incurred. It was as if we had been privileged to behold an act of creation, and had been witnesses of the transformation of chaos into order, into life, and into beauty.

The ascent and descent of Ben Lomond, allowing ample time for lunch or refreshment on the way, or at the top, may be easily made in six hours. Those fond of geological studies will do well to note, as they ascend, the unmistakable marks of glacial action upon the granite rock over which the track lies; and will be carried back in imagination to the far distant time when the now comparatively low ranges of the Highland Bens were snow-capped Alps, as high above the sea level as Mont Blanc or the Wetterhorn; and when, perhaps, Scotland formed, with Ireland and England, part of a continent that stretched westward a thousand miles from Cape Clear and the outer Hebrides. Evidently what is now the pole was not always the pole, nor the equator the equator, and earth and sea are ever changing their places in the mighty procession of the ages.

The sail down Loch Lomond from Inversnaid, or from the northernmost extremity at Inverarnan, at the entrance of Glen Falloch, to Balloch at the south, a distance of about five-and-twenty miles, is, in fine clear weather, a scene of varying beauty, such as few travellers are ever likely to forget. From Inverarnan to Inversnaid, the lake is scarcely broader than the Thames at Gravesend; but at the southern end towards Balloch it expands into a width of about seven or eight miles, and is thickly studded with islands, on which the larch, the rowan, and the silver birch (the damsel of the woods, as it is sometimes called in Scotland), flourish luxuriantly. But the excursion up and down the lake is soon made, and the pedestrian, after he has seen from the deck of the steamer all that is to be seen in that mode of travelling, and after he has gained the summit of the Ben, which is the first thing to be thought of, will do well to land at Tarbet, on the western side of the lake, and either stay at that hostelry, if he be willing to

defy gnats and midges that sting as ruthlessly as American mosquitoes, or walk across the narrow isthmus that separates Loch Lomond from Loch Long, to Arrochar, and make this his resting-place for two or three days. Loch Long, properly Loch Luing, or the "lake of ships," is grand and rugged, and owes its existence, not to Highland rills and rivers, and the abundant moisture of the clime, like the fresh-water lakes, but to the sea, which flows north-eastward from the Firth of Clyde, and is, though of smaller extent, a veritable fiord, like Loch Fyne and Loch Linnhe, its near neighbours.

The mountains at the head of Loch Long at Arrochar are of truly Alpine grandeur. Conspicuous above them towers to a height of three thousand feet and more the ragged and picturesque crest of Ben Arthur, or the "Cobbler," so called from the fancied resemblance of its upper crags to a cobbler hammering on his lapstone. The precipices of this mountain are so steep as to render the summit all but inaccessible, and the few who have braved the dangers of the way and successfully accomplished the feat, confess that the reward of their toil is not nearly so satisfactory as that which is afforded by the easier ascent of Ben Lomond. But if instead of ascending the Cobbler, and running the risk of breaking his neck (for nothing), the traveller decides upon traversing the solitudes of Glen Croe, that stretches for eight miles along the base of the mountain, he will be well rewarded. The glen is perfect of its kind, and needs only to be seen by artist, poet, or lover of natural scenery, to be appreciated as, only next to Glen Coe, the grandest in all Scotland. It is a winding valley with an occasional narrow strip of cultivated ground on the banks of the little river the Croe, from which it receives its name, and which signifies in Gaelic the "sheep-folds," and is flanked by rapid slopes, broken by protruding masses of rock, rising into precipitous acclivities, the hills split and cloven into separate summits of various form and outline. An excursion, occupying a day well spent, may be made by a tolerable pedestrian from Arrochar through this glen, and its continuations, to the head of Loch Fyne, and the little town of Inverary, the head-quarters of the Clan Campbell, and its chief the Duke of Argyll. The distance is not above twenty miles as the crow flies, but the road is tortuous and the ascent is steep, and may be fairly said to represent thirty miles of walking on more level

ground. Pedestrians who are not hardy enough for such an encounter of the hills, often compromise the matter by a walk of eight miles to the summit of the glen, where a large stone by the wayside, inscribed "REST, AND BE THANKFUL," invites the traveller to enjoy the twofold duty—or pleasure. It bears the date 1748, and was erected and inscribed by the British soldiers, who, after the suppression of the Jacobite rebellion in the memorable '45, were wisely employed by the government of the day to subdue the troublesome Highlanders by the civilised method of opening up the interior of the country, and constructing good roads. From this spot the descent is easy to Glen Kinglass, properly Canglas, or "grey-head," a beautifully wooded, and in some places pastoral glen, at the extremity of which stands the comfortable inn of Cairndhu. On the shore of Loch Fyne, boats may be obtained to Inverary, if the traveller prefers the shortest route. It should be mentioned that stage-coaches at convenient hours ply on what is called every "lawful day," that is to say every day but Sunday, through all the romantic regions connecting Glasgow with the West Highlands; so that neither the legs of the pedestrian, nor the purses of those who are unable or unwilling to walk, need be severely taxed for the means of locomotion.

Inverary, so called from its situation at the junction of the little river Aray with Loch Fyne, is the county town of Argyllshire, and offers no attraction to delay the footsteps of the traveller, unless it be the castle of the Duke of Argyll, the lovely scenery, Argyll's Bowling Green, the hill of Dunaquoich, or the fine Runic cross on the quay, transported thither from Iona; and if he be an epicure, the chance of a breakfast, dinner, or supper on herrings freshly caught in the lake. Loch Fyne herrings are celebrated all over Scotland for their large size and delicate flavour, and are universally admitted to be the finest herrings in the world. Other specimens of the genus mammalia, in addition to mankind, seem to be of this opinion, for whales often risk the dangers of the harpoon and the musket, and come up the loch to regale themselves upon this dainty, and occasionally reward the fishermen for the damage done to their ordinary sea-harvest by their own bodies, and the profitable blubber and whalebone which they yield. Naturalists are not agreed upon the causes of the superiority of the Loch Fyne herring, or whether it is to be accounted for by

difference of race, just as the Caucasian is superior to the Ethiopian, the Caffre, and the Malay, or by greater abundance of food, or peculiarity of climate, or by a combination of all these. The fact, however, remains, and is never disputed by any one who has once regaled upon the fish, within half an hour after its capture, either on board of the Glasgow steamer, plying to Inverary, or in the little town itself. In days not long since gone by, mine host of the Argyll Arms was not only famous for the admirable manner in which he, or perhaps his good wife, cooked and served up the herrings, but for his super-eminent skill in the concoction of "Athole brose." Whether his successor be equally an adept in both of these branches of the culinary art, I am unable to say. I can, however, safely advise every traveller in these regions to partake of the herrings, and to avoid the "brose," at all events not to try both on the same day. It is a maxim in the Highlands that everything put into whisky, except hot or cold water and sugar, spoils it. This is a matter of opinion, and I can only give it as mine, that the maxim holds true as regards "honey," and that anything more unpalatable than "Athole brose," which is a mixture of honey and whisky, and about as heavy as lead, is difficult to imagine.

Every one who has read and remembers Scott's Legend of Montrose, and the adventures, whims, oddities, and idiosyncrasies of the doughty Captain Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, will visit Inverary Castle with more interest than those who are unfamiliar with that story, though it has little to show, and that little not remarkable. Sir Walter Scott has, it appears, fallen into error, from his imperfect knowledge of the Gaelic, in designating the Duke of Argyll as "MacCullum More." The attention attracted to the history and antecedents of this illustrious family by the marriage of its heir with the Princess Louise of England, has elicited from Gaelic scholars a controversy, from which it appears that the true Celtic designation of the Duke of Argyll is MacVich Coilen Mohr, or the son of the great Colin, not Cullum; and that the Clan Campbell is known in the Highlands as the sons of Diarmid.

From Inverary to Oban, by Dalmally, Loch Awe, and Loch Etive, stretches a tract of country to be described hereafter. Meanwhile, leaving it unvisited, we retrace our steps towards the great city of Glasgow,

which is to be our next halting-place. That we may not re-pass over ground already trodden, we take a boat to Strachur, on the eastern shore of Loch Fyne, with the intention of walking to Kilmun, on the Holy Loch, and thence making our way to Glasgow by the steamer. Tourists who prefer the steamer for the whole distance will find daily facilities and ample enjoyment in a trip through the whole length of Loch Fyne, the Kyles of Bute, and the ever-varying scenery of the Firth of Clyde, and the narrowing river from Dumbarton up to Glasgow. But the tramp's the thing for those who are strong and willing, and prefer the simplest, as it is the best and most natural of all the modes of locomotion at man's service. So to the tramp we resort after landing at Strachur, and make our way through a well-cultivated tract to the head of Loch Eck. This lake, which is but little known, except to such citizens of Glasgow as love to angle for trout and salmon, and for this purpose make excursions to its lonely shores, and to the little river Eachaig, by which its waters are discharged into the Holy Loch, above Kilmun, is about nine miles in length, and at the widest half a mile in breadth. The hills on the western side rise abruptly from the water's edge, broken here and there by wooded ravines, high bare crags, and jagged peaks, where the feet of man, unless it be those of a shepherd, seldom tread. The whole scene suggests the intensity of solitude. A story is told of a rich Glasgow merchant, who made a fortune too rapidly, and retired from business in the early prime of his life, to enjoy himself in the country. He built himself a house upon the previously untrodden shores of Loch Eck, away from the public road, that he might not be overburdened with visitors. He had but few resources in his own mind. He had no literary tastes; did not much enjoy music, or shooting, or fishing; had no particular hobby or pursuit (blessed is the man who has a harmless hobby and the means to indulge in it!); and after a short residence in his grand new house, found his solitude as insupportable as Alexander Selkirk found his in the island of Juan Fernandez, and might have exclaimed with that prototype of our old friend Robinson Crusoe:

Oh, Solitude, where are the charms
That sages have found in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
Than reign in this horrible place!

There was no reason why this poor man,

poor in spite of all his wealth, should not have gone back to the active world which he had quitted, and resumed business for the sake of the only occupation for which his mind and habits were suited; but he was too proud to own that he had made a mistake, and persisted in perpetuating it. His wealth brought him no enjoyment. He had nothing to do; there was nothing he particularly cared for; books were a weariness, shooting a nuisance, fishing a bore, and he took no pleasure in the conversation of his fellows. So stomach and brain having gone wrong together, as they often do, he put a heavy stone round his neck, and jumped into the loch, where his body was discovered five days afterwards.

Salmon of forty pounds weight are sometimes caught in Loch Eck, a fact that renders the little inn at Whistlefield a favourite resort of solitary anglers. In reference to the quondam hostess of this inn, a celebrated living artist and enthusiastic fisherman tells the following story:

"I was once fishing in Loch Eck," said the artist, "but had caught nothing, and on my arrival at Whistlefield, very hungry and thirsty, I inquired of the honest Highland woman who keeps the place if I could have anything for dinner?"

"Oo, ay!" she replied, "anything you like to order, sir."

"Well, then, can you let me have a little bit of salmon, or a trout?"

"A'm vara sorra, but there's no saamont and no troot. There were some trovers (drovers) here yesterday; and they just ate up a' the saamont, and a' the troot. But ye can have anything else you like."

"Can you let me have a beefsteak?"

"Is it beef ye ar' askin' for? Beef? There's no beef; do ye think we can kill a coo?"

"Well, mutton-chops will do just as well."

"Chops!" she replied, with a melancholy whine; "chops! ye might hae had chops, only ye see the trovers were here yesterday, and they ate up a' the chops."

"You don't seem to have very much to choose from, my good woman; but perhaps you can let me have some ham and eggs, or bacon and eggs, I don't care which?"

"Ham and eggs! Lord save us! There's no a bit ham left in the hoose! The trovers, ye see——"

"Oh, confound the trovers; can you give me some eggs without the ham?"

"Deed, sir, that's just what I canna

dae; the trovers! heh! they're hungry callants, and can eat mair eggs than a' the hens in the country-side can lay. They didna leave me a single egg for my ain supper yesternight; but ye can hae onything else ye like to ca' for."

"Suppose, then, as you have no eggs, that you thraw (twist) the neck of the hen that laid them!"

"Deed, sir, I would dae that right willingly, but the trovers, ye see—the trovers! They not only ate up a' the eggs, but the hen and the cock as weel!"

"Then I suppose I can have nothing, and must walk on to Kilmun?"

"Na, na! wat for should ye do that? there's plenty in the hoose, if ye wad but just say what ye want."

"Plenty of what?"

"Plenty of cake (oat-cake) and butter, an' a bit o' 'ewe milk cheese, an' wusky (whisky) enough to soom (swim) in!"

"So I took the oat-cake, and the fresh butter, and the whisky; and I advise nobody to expect anything else at a Highland village."

Bearing this story in mind, I entered the small hostelry at Whistlefield, and found that better fortune attended me. The hostess had a trout at my disposal, and a grouse, with bread, oat-cake, and excellent fresh butter at discretion. The artist's story had become a tradition of past days, and on my asking the hostess if any "trovers" ever came that way, she replied, "Whiles, but that she didna care muckle for their company." From Whistlefield there is a by-road over the mountains on to Ardentinn (the Arranteenie of Tannahill's song, which the poet never visited), a secluded village on the wild western shore of Loch Long, deriving its name from Ard an teine, the hill or promontory of the beacon fire. There is a shorter and level road by the banks of the Eachaig to the Holy Loch, a pleasant little fiord of salt water that runs into the heart of the hills from the Firth of Clyde. When this loch acquired the name of holy is not positively known, though it is plausibly suggested that one Mun, a "monk of the west," mentioned in Montalembert's History, and a contemporary of Columba and the Culdees, whose high place was at Iona, established a chapel here in the seventh century. Hence, undoubtedly, the name of the village of Kilmun, or the Cell or Chapel of Mun; a favourite resort of the citizens of Glasgow, as soon as the apple-trees begin to put on their bloom, and

wives and daughters long to escape for their annual holiday "down the water." Long rows of neat villas and cottages, looking as small as dolls' houses, when compared with the huge masses of the hills behind them, line the shores of the Holy Loch, extend around the bold projecting corner at Strone Point, and thence push upward to Loch Long, as if they would invade every mountain solitude within reach of the Glasgow steamers. From the top of Strone Point, a heavy and a hard climb over hard rock and soft bog, and two thousand feet above the level of the sea, there is a magnificent view over the estuary of the Clyde, the towns of Helensburgh, Greenock, Gourock, Dunoon, and a score of other watering-places for which the noble river is famous, the whole encompassed by a gorgeous panorama of mountains, extending from Goatfell and Arran, the Cobbler and Ben Lomond, and fifty other Bens, each of which has its Gaelic name, unknown to any one but the shepherds and the dwellers at their base.

Kilmun is the burial-place of the family of Argyll. It is told of the late Douglas Jerrold, that he visited this place when in Scotland during the great Burns Festival in 1844. One of his companions remarked how unpleasant it must be to a member of the Campbell, or, indeed, any other family, to know and to visit the exact place where he was to be buried. "Very unpleasant, indeed," replied Jerrold, "and that is the reason why I never go into Westminster Abbey!"

From Kilmun there are morning and afternoon steamers up the Clyde to Glasgow, the commercial capital of Scotland; and one of the most flourishing and rapidly growing cities in the world.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LXXI. MAUD AND AN TOMARCHI UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER.

NEARLY ten minutes had passed, and Maud was sitting in her room, in profound gloom, almost a stupor; without motion; with her eyes upon the floor.

Mercy Creswell, unable to divine what her thoughts might be, was only a few steps away, standing against the wall, with her arms folded across, and her eyes turned, with a nervous side-glance on the young lady.

In the room beyond that, sat one of the athletic housemaids, who could have lifted

Maud off her feet, and carried her about the house as easily as her hat and jacket.

At this, the sitting-room door, now came a knock.

Doctor Antomarchi was there; Maud was on her feet in a moment.

This doctor had the peculiar marble skin which is ascribed to the first Napoleon. Dark and colourless, his strongly pronounced under-jaw, and thin lips, his delicate black eyebrows, and piercing, cold eyes, gave a character of severity and decision to his massive face, which inspired fear in all who were subjected to his authority.

Some little sensation of this kind modified Miss Vernon's agitated feelings as he entered the room, and made his bow of ceremony, in obedience to her summons.

"Oh, Doctor Antomarchi!" she said, calmly, "I will try to tell you how I have been duped. I came here under the persuasion that I was on my way to Carsbrook, Lady Mardykes's house. I find that I have been horribly deceived. I am a prisoner, and I can't escape. I am here, helpless, in the most awful place a mortal can be committed to—a madhouse. I have not a single friend or adviser to turn to in this great danger. I am utterly alone. I have been brought up in a very lonely way, in the country, and I don't know much of the ways of the world, or what I ought to do in this dreadful case. May God help me!" Her lip trembled. "You, sir, can have no wish to keep me here, if I am perfectly in my right mind; and, as God is my hope, I am not mad, nor ever was supposed to be! My good cousin, Maximilla Medwyn, when I write to her, will come and tell you so. And you, I have heard, are learned, and clever, and can easily decide whether I tell you truth; and if you find that I am what I describe, you will set me at liberty."

"What you say is reasonable," replied Antomarchi, not one muscle of whose stern face had evinced a sign of life during Maud's appeal, and whose dark grey eye had shown neither light nor softening. "Shall I say a word in private?" he added, glancing at the servant.

"Do—pray."

He signed to Mercy Creswell to leave the room, which she did.

He then in a low tone, with an air of very marked deference, said:

"Your request is grounded on a supposition, which, if sustained by proof, would insure its being instantly granted. All

you say is quite fair. As to the fact on which you rely, however, it is, I regret to say, more than disputed in the papers which have been placed before us; and while you remain here, which may be a very short time indeed, I need scarcely say, you shall be treated with the greatest possible consideration, and everything done to make your sojourn as little disagreeable as possible. Would you object, Miss Vernon, to accompany me to my room downstairs. I wish very much, with your permission, to call your attention to a circumstance."

The lady assented. Together they entered the gallery. Doctor Antomarchi took a key from his pocket and opened the iron door, which separated that portion of the long corridor, from which Miss Vernon's rooms opened, from the remainder of the gallery, passing westward.

In the wildest dream, no matter how fantastic the situation and strange the scenery, the dreamer follows the action of his vision with good faith, and the sense of incredulity slumbers. But here was a reality strangely horrible as any dream she had ever dreamed. She heard their tread on the boards, she felt the cold smooth bannister on which her hand rested, as they went down the private spiral stair, and it was an effort to think it real.

Now she had arrived. The door was shut. When she had placed herself in one of the great chairs in the oval-room, of which she and Doctor Antomarchi were the only tenants, he touched a bell, without speaking, and Mr. Darkdale entered.

Maud wondered what was passed. Antomarchi rose quickly, and two or three steps brought him to Darkdale's side. That slight dark man inclined his ear; and as Antomarchi concluded a few whispered sentences, he nodded, and immediately withdrew.

Maud heard nothing of what passed.

The doctor returned, and sat down at the opposite side of the table.

"I think it desirable to impress upon you, Miss Vernon, two or three facts, which, while here, you will find it very much to your advantage to bear in mind."

An intimidating change had come over Doctor Antomarchi's face, and he was speaking in stern, measured accents. His ceremonious manner was quite gone, and he was talking as a cold, insolent colonel might to a defaulting drummer-boy on the parade-ground.

"The inmates of that part of the house

in which apartments are assigned to you, are generally quite competent to understand what I now say. It is my duty to treat you with what skill I possess; it is yours to submit; and submit you shall. I have heard of your language, of your violence, of your covert menace of forcing an escape, or committing self-destruction. Sufficient precautions are taken in this establishment to render that crime impracticable. There are people confined here whose desire to commit suicide never leaves them. They hope for nothing else, they dream of nothing else; they are persistent and crafty, and yet all their persistence, cunning, and wickedness are daily defeated with perfect ease and certainty. Violence, here, leads necessarily to repression; contumacy, in the most trifling particulars, to increased restraint; and angry language, as tending in certain nervous states to produce corresponding action, necessarily to subjection to a treatment that is intensely disagreeable. * These, you understand, are not punishments; they are precautions, and processes, though painful, strictly of a sanatory kind. And now, you distinctly comprehend, that neither unmeasured language, nor violence of temper, nor threats of suicide, or of escape, ever fail to bring down on the patient who indulges in them consequences which are deplorable."

All the time he thus spoke his eyes were fixed on those of the young lady, who felt the power of that indescribable coercion.

Under it thought grew vague, and the power to will became torpid.

"You will be so good, Miss Vernon, as to accompany me a little further," said Antomarchi, his eye upon her, as he suddenly arose. The young lady, without answering, followed him.

Through a door at the side of this room, a short and narrow passage, tiled and lighted by a window over the door, conducted them to a small but lofty room, also tiled, the arrangements of which were singular.

In the corner of this room rose something that looked like a tall iron press, of some four feet square, which reached or rather seemed to pass through the ceiling. There was no other furniture except two small shelves; and a piece of thick rug lay on the floor.

"You are here, Miss Vernon, merely as a spectator, to witness, in part, the practice to which the refractory are subjected. There is nothing more refreshing than a

shower-bath. Taken in the ordinary way it is a luxurious stimulant. You will see what it is when administered in a case of morbidly over-excited energies. This is a powerful shower-bath. The patient upon whom you will see it exercised is a lady whom you have seen not an hour ago. She styles herself the Duchess of Falconbury. You shall see, in her case, how we reduce that unhappy state upon sanatory principles."

Darkdale opened the door and looked in.

"The patient is coming;" and he inquired, "do you wish it now?"

"Yes," said Antomarchi.

Maud heard a sound of feet descending the stairs, accompanied by a muffled noise of furious hysterics.

"Your maid, Mercy Creswell, is to attend her," said Antomarchi, coolly. "It will show you that she is a woman of nerve, and can do her duty."

This impertinence did not fire Maud's pride, as an hour or two ago it would. A part of her nature had been reduced to a state of trance.

"You have taken an ordinary shower-bath, I dare say, Miss Vernon, and found it quite long and heavy enough? This, from its greater height, has a fall more than twice as heavy. Yours lasted only a fraction of a minute, this will descend without interruption for exactly thirty-five minutes. Yours, probably, contained between two and three stone weight of water; this will discharge between eight and nine tons. You observe, then, that it is very different from anything you have experienced. Are you ready?"

"Yes, sir," answered Mercy Creswell, who looked a little pale. "How long, please, sir?"

"Thirty-five minutes," said the doctor.

"But please, sir," said Creswell, growing paler, "that is five minutes longer than the longest."

The doctor nodded.

"She never had it before, sir."

"Better *once* effectually, than half-measures repeatedly," remarked the doctor to Miss Vernon, with his watch in his hand. "Take the winch," he said to Mercy Creswell. "When the minute-hand reaches half-past (keep your eye on the clock), you turn it on; and when it reaches five minutes past, you turn it off. You are ready? Stay—wait—look to the minute-hand—now."

As the doctor uttered the final direction, at the same instant Mercy Creswell turned

the handle, and a rush perceptibly louder and heavier than any heard in those toys of luxury, which don't deserve the name of shower-bath in sight of these titanic appliances.

The cries and shrieks of the unfortunate patient are soon hushed. No sound is heard in that torture-room but the ceaseless, thundering fall of the water, and the loud ticking of the clock as it slowly tells off the allotted time.

At length the dreadful half-hour has passed. Five minutes remain—the hand is measuring the last minute. Antomarchi's eye is on the second-hand of his watch—the last second is touched. "Stop," cries his loud voice, and the winch is turned.

The noise of the falling water has ceased. The door is open, the room is as still as the dead-house of an hospital, where no one comes to claim the dead outcast. A great silence has come. In a whisper Mercy directs the women, who obey in silence.

The "patient" is lifted out, and placed on a chair in the midst of the room. She looks lifeless. Her long dark hair clings about her shoulders. Her arms hang helplessly and the water streams over her, over her hair, over her closed eyes, in rivulets; over her pretty face that looks in a sad sleep; over her lace and vanities; over her white slender hands that hang by her sides, and over her rings, making little rills and pools along the tiles.*

There must be the agonies of drowning in all this; worse than common drowning, drowning by a slower suffocation and with a protracted consciousness.

And now there is the greater agony of recovery.

The doctor had returned to the side of the poor duchess, who was now breathing, or rather sighing, heavily, and staring vaguely before her.

His fingers were again on her pulse.

"Give her the white mixture," he said to Mercy Creswell, glancing at a phial which stands beside a cup on a table a little way off.

"Oh, sir, please, doctor, not this time,

* This peculiar use of the shower-bath in the treatment of the insane is no fiction. It was supported on the theory that in the awfully depressing malady of madness, if a patient is "violent," "noisy," "excited," and "destructive," "quiet" and "docility" are legitimately to be induced by "overpowering" him, and "prostrating the system" by a continuous shower-bath of monstrous duration, followed up on his release from the bath by a nauseating emetic, still further to exhaust an already prostrate system. This outrageous treatment is no longer countenanced by the faculty, or practised in any institution.

sir," faltered Mercy Creswell. "She eat no breakfast, I hear, sir, and she'll be very bad for hours after she takes the mixture."

"Shake it first; pour it into the cup; and administer it to the patient. Do your duty, Creswell."

She shook the bottle, poured its contents into the cup, and, with a frightened face, did as she was ordered.

Antomarchi said to Darkdale: "The patient may go now. You will show them Mrs. Fish's new rooms. Creswell, you are not to accompany her. You attend Miss Vernon now as before. Miss Vernon, you can return to your rooms."

He made her a bow, and in a moment more Maud and her femme de chambre had left the room.

"Miss Vernon, a spirited young lady," mused Antomarchi. "She has had her first lesson."

CHAPTER LXXII. QUESTION AND ANSWER.

It is well when, even in after-life, we can see that our sufferings have made us better—that God has purged the tree, and not cursed it—that the fire from heaven has purified, and not left all barren, for ever, like the Dead Sea plain.

This awful time in Maud's life will do a good work in her. Her character has suffered from the coldness of her mother, from occasional periods of parental caprice and coercion, and from long intervals of the indulgence of absolute neglect. God has found her a time and a place in which to think upon Him, and on herself. These awful days, if they lead her to see and to amend her faults, will not have passed in vain.

For four-and-twenty hours Maud never opened her lips to speak one word to Mercy Creswell. But the quarrel of the two sailors in the lighthouse would not do here; and a little reflection tells Maud that Mercy Creswell, after all, has acted in this affair under orders, and in good faith, believing all representations made to her by so great and good a woman as Lady Vernon, and walking honestly in such light as she had. These silent relations would not be long endurable to Maud herself; and her anger against Mercy Creswell was not altogether reasonable.

I do not wonder, therefore, that before the evening of the next day Maud was on speaking terms again with her maid. The situation was now distinctly before her mind; but hope, irrepressible, began to revive.

"Do you know, Mercy," asked the young lady, after they had talked a little, and a short silence had intervened, during which she was in deep thought, "upon what subject they say I am mad?"

"I don't know, indeed, miss; I don't know at all. Only Lady Vernon told me the doctors said so; and she had no doubt of it herself." Mercy Creswell was speaking now without the preliminary hesitation which gave, while Maud was still in the dark as to the nature of the real relations in which they stood, and of the house of which she was an inmate, an air of reserve and prevarication to all her answers. "But, miss, it mayn't last no time. There was a lady sent away from here last week, quite right again, as had bin here only two months."

"But is there nothing? Why were my scissors and penknives taken away? And the breakfast knives are silver, like dessert knives?"

"Oh, yes, miss! Yes, to be sure. It was said you threatened, different times, to take away your life, miss. That was the reason."

Another silence followed.

"Every girl, when she's vexed, wishes herself dead. But she does not mean it. I never had a thought of suicide all the time I was at home—*never*, at *any* time. I am foolish and violent sometimes; but I am not wicked. Mercy Creswell, do you care about me?"

"La! miss, I like ye well, miss, and always did."

"Do people listen at the doors, here?" she said, lowering her voice.

"Not they, miss; they have no time—too busy—they don't care, not a jack-straw, what you're talking about, and if anything goes wrong there's the bell at hand. *That* will bring hands enough in no time."

"For how long have you been here?" asked Maud.

"It will be five years next November, miss."

"Then you can't be mistaken about anything here," mused Maud. "You must know all their rules—I wonder, Mercy, whether you care for me?"

"Yes, surely, miss," she answered.

Maud was silent again, looking at Mercy thoughtfully.

"You were very young, Mercy, and I only a child, when we were together in Roydon nursery; but—I'm afraid—you have no affection for me."

"Why will ye say that, Miss Maud; don't you know I always liked ye well? Affection! well, miss, I think 'twould be less than kind in me if I hadn't."

Maud looked again thoughtfully at Mercy Creswell, and then on the ground, and then raising her eyes, she said:

"Do they often inflict that dreadful punishment that I witnessed yesterday?"

"The bath, ma'am? La! you wouldn't call that a punishment. There's nothing Doctor Antomarchi is more particular about than that—not one of us here dar' call it a punishment."

"Well, half-drowning, or whole-drowning, as it may turn out, is that often inflicted in this place?"

"Well, Mr. Damian would not allow it, perhaps, twice in a year, when he's at home, and then only ten or twelve minutes, and no white mixture. But Doctor Antomarchi, he'd be harder on them—he's a man that won't stand no nonsense from no one." Mercy nodded with a dark significance at Maud as she said this. "He won't spare neither high nor low. He may do as he pleases. La! no one ever minds what a patient says. The doctor has only to smile and shake his head, and whisper a word in the ear of father, or mother, or brother, or whoever comes to see that the patient is comfortable, and all his grumbling and complaints, they're just took for so much dreams, and nothings, and no one never believed but the doctor."

"It is very bad—it is horrible," and poor Maud shuddered.

There was another silence, and then Maud asked:

"Has Lady Mardykes sold her place? Is this Carsbrook?"

"La! no, miss; this is Glarewoods, Mr. Damian's asylum. It is like Carsbrook in a way, and it's not like it. They are both black and white houses. But Carsbrook is a beautiful house; not so big as this great barracks, but you never saw a prettier. There's nothing in this to look at, without they fits up two or three rooms special, like these was done for you. It is a bare-looking place, and furnished very plain; but Carsbrook is beautiful all through. It is too grand almost. You'd say 'tis a pity to walk on the carpets, or sit on the chairs."

"But—but it was described to me exactly like this. The croquet-ground, and everything."

"Yes, it has a croquet-ground, with a hedge round it; but it is shaped different;

round at the corners; and it lies to t'other side of the house."

"And the flower-garden round it," says Maud, still a little bewildered.

"Ay, the flower-knots; yes, they was laid out by the same man as settled them that's at Carsbrook. But as for all the rest, if you was to see the two places, you would not think there was two things about 'em alike; no more there ain't."

"Glarewoods—I think I have heard it mentioned—and Mr. Damian's name——"

"He's a hard man in some things, miss. But 'twould be well if all was like him," she added, with a dark little nod.

She had already told Maud of his absence, and the uncertainty respecting the time of his return.

A time of great mental agony, however measured by clock or calendar, is a time of great duration. The moment when her terrific discovery broke upon her, seemed now a long way off. The period of violent agitation was over; and a gloomy, calculating listlessness had come instead. Almost without effort of her own, everything, in turn, that promised a chance of liberation, revolved in her mind, hovered there a little, and gave place to some new hope, or thought, call it which you will.

CHAPTER LXXIII. A DISAPPOINTMENT.

THERE was another silence now, and Maud got up, and walked slowly about the room. At the piano, which she had not touched for two days, she lingered for a little, and now with one hand she softly struck a chord or two, as she went on thinking.

"I certainly saw Lady Mardykes here. There could be no deception, at least, about that. Does she know that I am here?"

"No, miss; I'm sure she don't."

"Why do you suppose that?"

"Well, miss, ye won't say a word if I tells you—if you do, it might be the worse for me."

"Certainly, not a word," promised Maud, whose curiosity was excited.

"Well, miss, Doctor Antomarchi told me you wasn't to get into the croquet-ground, nor out of your own room, yesterday morning, till after Lady Mardykes was gone, and he told me the minute to keep ye to, and I did; and something more, and so I did; but after all, ye was as near meeting—la! but ye was—as ever two was, in the gallery!"

"Perhaps she knew, but did not herself wish to see me?" ruminated Maud.

"No, not a bit; she's not that way, no, she's very good-natured. She came all the way from Carsbrook the morning after you came, and yesterday, only to see about that poor young man, Mr. Vivian Mardykes, her husband's nephew. 'Twas him, on his way here, as overtook us near Torvey's Cross. 'Twas a very sad thing. He went mad after a fall from his horse out a-hunting; and he was promised in marriage to a young lady near Oxford; and he thinks, poor fella, he's a capting in the army! La, but it is funny, poor lad! And he hates the name of Mardykes, and won't call himself nothing but Vivian, Capting Vivian! and Lady Mardykes took it to her heart, awful. He got well again, very near, while, and he took bad after, and had come back, as you saw. And, to-day, I say, he's very bad—some inflammation that may kill him—and goodness knows, 'twould be a mercy he was took."

"Whose funeral was that I saw from my window the first night I slept here?"

"That was Lord Corrington's second son; I believe he drank, poor man; he grew paralytic; a deal on 'em goes off that way."

"It was you," said Maud, suddenly, after another pause, "who took away my pen-knives and scissors."

"Well it *was*, miss," said Mercy, brazening it out with sullen resolution. "I must do as I am ordered, and I *will*, and there's the whole story out."

"How could you tell me all the untruths you did, about that and other things?"

"La, miss! if you was in my place you'd do the same. We must humour patients, or we could not get on, no time."

"Patients! And you really think me mad?"

"I'm not fit to judge, miss; 'tis for wiser heads than me."

A longer silence than before ensued; Maud was thinking, as she leaned her head lightly on her hand.

It was a horrible thought that even her companion had no faith in her sanity; horrible, too, that her own word went for nothing. How can she prove that she is *not* mad? Prove a negative! A dreadful excitement streams up to her brain, gush after gush. The small vigilant eyes of Mercy Creswell watched her with a restless, sidelong scrutiny.

"Fetch me a glass of water," said Maud, and sipped some. "Give me the eau-de-cologne," she said, and bathed her temples and forehead.

For a good while there was silence, and Mercy Creswell stood, as before, eyeing her young mistress.

Maud sighed and looked at her, and seemed on the point of saying something that lay near her heart, but changed her mind.

"Will Lady Mardykes be here again soon?" she asked, instead.

"I told Mr. Darkdale to ask, on account of you, miss, for I did not want to get into trouble unawares; and he told me she might not come for another month, or more, for the doctor promised to write to her, telling how Mr. Vivian Mardykes is getting along."

Maud looked down again, and sighed. There was another silence. Then she raised her eyes, and looked for a time earnestly at her humble companion; and once more she asked her oft-repeated question:

"Mercy, do you really care about me?"

"Why, miss, you knows I do. 'Twould be a queer thing if I didn't, sure. I always liked you, Miss Maud; I always did, indeed."

"If you care for me ever so little," said Maud, suddenly standing before her, with her hand on her shoulder, and looking hard in her face, with dark eyes, now dilated and stern, with the earnestness of horror, "you will help me, Mercy, to escape from this place."

"Escape, miss!" exclaimed Mercy, after she had gaped at her for some seconds, in consternation. "La bless you, miss, all the wit in fifty heads would not manage that. They're wide awake, and lots of hands and eyes everywhere; and good locks, and safe widdows, and high walls, and bell-wires, in a many a place, miss, ye would not suppose, that would ring, almost, if a fly walked over them. There's no chance of getting out that way; and anyhow, I could not have act or part in it, and I *won't*, Miss Maud; and you mustn't never talk that way in my hearing, miss, for I'm bound to report it, and won't run no risks for nonsense. Ye must not be offended, miss, for I knows a sight better than you do, all about it."

"If you won't aid me in that, at least you will manage to have a letter put in the post for me. I must write to Mr. Coke, my attorney; and to my cousin, Miss Madwyn. I ask for nothing but inquiry. There can be no honest reason for refusing that."

"I'm sorry, miss, to refuse you," said the maid, doggedly; "but the rule is that

all letters is subject to inspection—'subject to inspection' is the words in the order-book, and no letter from a patient to be conveyed to the post-office, 'conveyed to the post-office,' mind, 'or by a messenger'—I'm telling ye the very words of the order—'except by the permission of the principal, or his rapperrassentative'—I'm telling you the very words, miss—'in the one case, by the post-bag of the consulting-room,' and he has the only key of it in the house, 'and in the other, by the messenger of the consulting-room for the day.' Them's the identical words, I could say them in my sleep."

"Then you won't—oh, my God!—you won't; and I have none to help me!"

"I won't do that, miss; no, I won't."

There was a long interval of silence, during which Maud walked distractedly about the room. At last she turned and said gently:

"Well, Mercy, you may, at least, do this—you may write yourself to my cousin, Miss Medwyn, and tell her I am here, and that I implore of her to come and see me without delay."

"No, miss, I can't do that."

"Not for me, in this extremity? It isn't much. Oh! think—think—take pity on me—you could not be so cruel."

"I won't do it for no one, miss. You don't know this 'ouse, miss, like I does. It's no use a-pressing of me. I won't, miss; and what's more, I couldn't, if I would. And don't say no more about it, or I must report it to the doctor."

Mercy delivered this speech with a flushed face, and many a wag of her head, looking straight at the wall, and not at Maud.

"I'll tell you what, miss, if you be as you say," resumed Mercy, after an interval, "and has nothing to signify wrong with you—you'll not be long here. Only you must draw it mild—I mean ye must 'ave patience, and do hevrything accordin' to the rules. Look at that poor foolish Mrs. Fish, jest puttin' herself in a tantarem with that creature Ap-Jenkins; it's jest like puttin' a light to one o' them fireworks; once they takes fire, away they goes, and none to hold 'em till they has the fun out; and now she's out o' this side, beyond the cross-door, among the dangerous 'uns, and much stricter looked after; you'll not see

her in the croquet-ground very like for a year to come again."

Not for a year! How frightful that Mercy should assume that she was still to be an inmate of Glarewoods at the end of a year!

Maud had made up her mind not to quarrel with Mercy, and here it required a little effort to avoid it.

It was dismaying to meet this rebuff, where she had begun to hope for sympathy and active aid. What sordid brutality it was!

But already Maud Vernon had grown more tolerant. In this strange seclusion, she had learned more of human nature and had her sense of superiority much ab humbled, in two or three days, than in the her life before.

"Service is no inheritance, miss, as I've often heard say, and if I don't look to myself, who will? You know, miss, 'twould never do to get the sack from here, and not know where to turn to. But if ye'll jest have patience, and don't get into no rows, nor refuse your meals, nor your walking and driving, or whatever's ordered for you, nor never sulk, nowadays, about nothing, you'll not be long till something turns up. Why should the doctor want to keep you here, miss, a day longer than is fit? There's never a room empty in this house; and one customer's money is as good as another's; so don't you think or imagine, if you're not a case for Glarewoods, you'll be here any time to speak of, and when you're on the convalescent list you'll have more liberty, and ye'll be allowed to write to your friends. Only don't ye mar all by nonsense. If you're ever so well in your wits, you'll drive yourself out of them, so sure as ye take to moping, and sulking, and roaring, and raving. 'Tis best to be quiet, and orderly, and cheerful, and happy, and that's my advice to you, miss; be always pleasant, while you stays at Glarewoods."

283 P.

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CHAPTER VI. A MEETING BY DAYLIGHT.

WHEN Madge Pierrepont arrived at her lodgings, she found the door open, and Miss Cave looking down the street.

"At last, my dear," said the old lady: "I thought you were never coming; I have got the fidgets upon me to-night, and have been up two or three times to look out for you; and when I heard your foot-step coming round the crescent—I would know it in a thousand—I thought I would wait, and get a little fresh air until you came up. Now in with you and get to bed at once; what with last night and all, you must be dog tired."

"And I am very tired, Miss Cave," said Madge, with a faint smile.

"Tired, my dear; I have no patience with that old Probus keeping you up to this hour. Was he pleased with what you did last night?"

"Very much pleased indeed," said Madge, recollecting the letter she had received from the Shakespearian enthusiast; "he said he had not seen anything like it since Miss O'Neill."

"Did he? Now, come, that was very civil of him, and not bad judgment either, for I saw her myself, and you resemble her in many points. Come now, my dear, you are dropping off to sleep, just you O'Neill off to bed." And the good old woman, closing the door, took Madge gently by the shoulder, and pushed her before her up the stairs.

On the dressing-table, in Madge's room, lay a twisted slip of paper. She took it up and read in Rose's handwriting:

"G. H. was greatly disappointed at not

finding you to-night. He has something very particular to say to you; he will be away all day to-morrow. He says he will see you in the evening, and you must keep yourself disengaged, as it is most important. I wonder what it is: you will tell me, Madge, won't you?"

When Madge had finished reading the paper, she smoothed it out mechanically between her hands, laid it on the table again, and seated herself on the edge of her bed. The words which she had just perused made no impression on her mind. Her thoughts went back to the interview she had gone through, and as she recollected Philip Vane's last speech, her face grew grey, and set, and rigid, and her hands almost involuntarily locked themselves together in front of her.

"Not the remotest intention of going with me! that was what he said; his business engagements would prevent him. His business engagements! So that I am to go away to America, Australia, or to any other place where my employers may choose to take me, and he is to remain at home. I am to be thrown into such society as I may chance to meet, to make my own way as best I can, and he, the only person in the world to whom I can look, or ought to look, for advice, consolation, or help, is to remain here, consoling himself for my absence by the receipt of a larger income derived from my earnings, which he will undoubtedly take every means to secure. It is too low, too mean, too unmanly!"

"To go away by myself to the other end of the world for three years, that is what he asked me! I will not do it, come what may, I will not do it! I have been too patient and too quiet as it is; I have slaved for him ungrudgingly, unrepiningly, in the

knowledge that I was his wife, and in the ridiculous hope that his acknowledgment of my position was merely a matter of time. Now he proposes to get rid of me for three years, and with such a man as Philip Vane, it is not difficult to understand what that means. Three years! But only two have elapsed since we were married, and even in that short time my attraction for him has so waned, my hold on him has so relaxed, that he makes me such a proposition as this.

"What is it?" she cried, suddenly, stepping leisurely across the room, and looking at herself in the looking-glass on the dressing-table. "Have I grown plain, old, or repulsive? I confess I cannot see the alteration," she added, proudly, shaking her hair back, after a moment's inspection of herself; "nor if Mr. Philip Vane thinks so, is his opinion shared by every one. Here," laying her hand on Rose's crumpled note, "here is evidence to the contrary. Here is some one younger, better looking, and, unless I am very much mistaken, better bred, than Mr. Philip Vane, who would give all that he holds dearest in life for the companionship which that gentleman despises! Another example, God knows not wanted, of the misery set forth in those words, 'too late.' If I had only known Gerald Hardinge—I talk like a fool! Gerald Hardinge is a boy, who is nothing to me, and Philip Vane is—my husband."

Her husband! The mere sound of the word sent her thoughts into a different current. Philip Vane was still the principal figure, not as she had just seen him, cold, sneering, practical, and hard, but ardent, romantic, and impassioned. Chesham Castle and the path along the windings of the silver Wye, the young man so different in the polished ease of his demeanour, and the style of his conversation, even in the fit of his clothes, and his graceful negligent manner of carrying himself, from any one she had ever seen before. The stolen interviews, the long walks, finally the quiet marriage, with the local fisherman and his wife as the only witnesses; all these scenes and imaginations came floating across her brain and mysteriously served to still the storm which was raging within her breast. Philip could not mean what he had said; he could not think of parting with her for three years! It was to try her, perhaps, that he had suggested it; and she had fallen so readily into the trap. Perhaps she, too, was to blame; her place was by his side, and she ought to have tried to fall in with his pro-

position for her going to London. She would agree to that now, she would tell him so to-morrow, and then there would be no more questions of her going abroad, and the old happy time, the time of two years ago, would come back again. And so thinking, Madge Pierrepont fell asleep.

These kindly feelings, these hopes for the future, had not passed away when Madge awoke in the morning. On first opening her eyes, indeed, the sense of some impending calamity, which she had felt so strongly on the receipt of Philip's last letter on the previous evening, haunted her again; but when she recollected her recent thoughts, and her determination to submit herself to her husband's wishes, so far at least as accepting an engagement in London was concerned, she speedily got the better of her weakness, and had not much difficulty in persuading herself that a happy future was yet in store for her. So, full of hopes and anticipations, she started forth soon after she had finished her breakfast. She knew that at that time she need fear no interruption from Rose, who during the whole of the morning was busy with her various lessons, or from Miss Cave, who, after the ordering of her little household, invariably set forth to take her place in the box-office of the theatre, a position which just then claimed her attention even more rigidly than usual, as the season was about to terminate, and all outstanding accounts had to be carefully gone through.

Madge knew, moreover, that at such an hour she should be able to walk through the streets without undergoing the severe scrutiny which was usually bestowed upon her. The good people of Wexeter, though better bred than those of many other provincial towns, were yet human. Consequently, the sight of anybody whom they recognised as connected with the theatrical profession, when attired in ordinary costume, and proceeding through the streets in an ordinary manner, awoke in them an amount of curiosity which betrayed itself, even amongst the highest and most refined, in covert glances, amongst the less delicate in prolonged stares, and amongst the boys in loud shouts of recognition and warwhoops of a wild character, indicative of a desire on the part of the shouters to make an onslaught on the person observed, and to ascertain by pinches and other manual appliances, whether they were really flesh and blood. Miss Cave, indeed, had a legend which she was accustomed to narrate on special occasions, setting forth that within

the memory of her father, the actors had been known as "lakers," and that on any of them being recognised in the streets, the cry of "The lakers, the lakers!" would call forth the utterance of the ferocious hint to "smash their heads agin the wall." This, however, was in the dark ages, and now the recognised members of the company were only subjected to a great amount of staring and whispered observations, generally of a complimentary character.

Even from this torture—for torture it was to a sensitive-minded woman—Madge Pierrepont was free during her early walk. It was a tacitly recognised tradition among the Wexeter people, that no one was to be seen in the streets until the afternoon. The members of the cathedral, their families, and a few ladies, old and young, regularly attended morning service, before and after which the female heads of families might have been seen discharging their marketing duties; but the generality of these persons constituting what was called society in the good old town, never appeared in public until after that meal, which by a polite fiction passed as luncheon, but which in most cases was understood to be dinner.

Thus, when Madge reached the lane at the back of the Dumpington turnpike, she found the spot almost as much deserted as on the previous night, scattered parties of working people in the distant fields being the only human creatures within view.

Eleven o'clock rang out from the cathedral as she arrived within sight of her destination, and on hearing the sound she quickened her pace, and when she turned into the little lane, her heart was beating fast, and her face was all aglow. She was compensated for her hurry, however, by finding that she was first at the spot; and it was not until after she had taken two or three leisurely turns up and down, recovering her breath, that she heard the sound of wheels, and looking round saw Philip Vane alight from a cab by the turnpike, and advance towards her.

That Major Vane was not in a very good temper, was evident from his first words.

"You are going to tell me that I am late, I suppose?" he said, "but you need not, because I know it! Not that I overslept myself, or anything of that sort. How anybody sleeps at all in that infernal hotel is a matter of wonder to me; it's a sin and a shame that a place like that shouldn't have something better than such a pot-house for a gentleman to put up at."

"I wasn't going to say a word about your being late, Philip; I am only sorry to hear

you were not comfortable at the Half Moon. Everybody speaks so well of the house."

"It may be all very well for bagmen, and people of that kind," said Major Vane,

with great disgust.

"It has the reputation of being very clean," said Madge.

"Clean," echoed the Major; "I knew you would say that! When people can say nothing else for an inn, they say it's clean! Just as when they can say nothing else for a man, they say he is good-natured. All I know is, the beds seem as if they were stuffed with potatoes instead of feathers, and they give you cotton sheets—cotton sheets, by Jove!"

"Well, it was only for one night, Philip," said Madge, soothingly; "to-day you will be able to go back to your London luxuries."

"My London luxuries—while you struggle on here! Is that what you mean to convey?" said Philip Vane, looking at her sharply.

"No, indeed, I did not mean to convey anything of the kind," said Madge, quietly; "I meant no sneer. And, indeed," she added, with a desperate effort of cheerfulness, "I do not intend you to enjoy those luxuries, if luxuries they be, much longer by yourself. I intend to come up and share them with you."

"The deuce you do!" said the major, in a loud key. "Oh, you have been thinking over what I said to you last night, then?"

"I have."

"And what is the result of your deliberation?"

"I will tell you, Philip; but before I tell you, let me say one word about myself, about ourselves. I have been thinking a great deal, not merely about this one proposition, but about our lives altogether, and it strikes me that, for the last few months at all events, there has been a sort of division between us, not expressed, indeed, but nevertheless existing, which should not be. Our interests are one, and our great point in life should be to carry them out by working together loyally, and in unison. Do you follow me, Philip?"

He was standing with his face turned towards her now, but with his eyes looking far away over her shoulder, swaying himself to and fro, and switching his legs with a small cane which he carried in his hand.

"Oh, yes, I follow you," he said; "it isn't time for me to speak just yet, while you are dealing in generalities. I am waiting until you come to the point, before I have my little say."

Madge winced as he spoke, but took no

further notice. Then she proceeded: "I have no doubt that I have been very foolish in allowing my fears to get the better of me, and in refusing to go and act in London. It must seem ridiculous to you that I should be wasting what remains to me of my youth and energy, in playing to provincial audiences, and in earning so small a salary. I can fully understand that, from what you saw of me two years ago, you imagined that I should by this time have made much greater progress, and been enabled to contribute much more effectively to our income. You shall not have that cause for complaint any longer. I will not even refuse to appear in any style of character, which your good sense and knowledge of the world may decide that I should undertake with a chance of success; I will give up any scruples of the kind which I have hitherto held, and if you will get me an engagement—and I am sure, amongst all the people you know, there must be plenty who would be proud to oblige you—I will go to London."

She looked up into his face as she said these last words, and made a slight movement of her hand towards him, as though expectant of some little recognition of her speech. In this, however, she was disappointed. Major Vane merely stopped himself in the act of switching his legs, and looking down at her, said: "You seem to have mistaken what I said to you last night; there was no question of going to London in the matter."

"No, not in what you last proposed, I know; but you have said more than once that you wished I would go to London, and now I am not merely willing, but anxious to do so, Philip."

"It seems impossible to get you women to be business-like," said Major Vane, pettishly. "I took the trouble to come down here yesterday, bringing you an offer, which I should have thought you would only have been too glad to have availed yourself of, and given me my reply at once. You demanded time for deliberation, and I accorded it. Now, when you should communicate to me your decision, you branch off upon a totally different topic."

His tone was harsh and morose, his manner half scornful, half savage. As Madge listened to, and looked at him, all her recently formed resolutions of submission, all her growing hopes for peace in the present, and happiness in the future, melted away. If such were to be the response to all her overtures of affection, they had been made for the last time.

Hurt, proud, and defiant, she threw her head back and said, with as much calmness as she could call to her aid: "Since you wish our relations to be merely on a strict business footing, you will find me prepared to meet your wishes so far. You ask me if I will accept a three years' engagement to travel with a theatrical company through America and Australia, you, during that time, remaining in England. Do I state the matter rightly?"

"With almost legal precision," said Major Vane, with a sneer.

"Then to that proposition I answer, 'No! no! no!' See here, Philip Vane: I came to you this morning prepared to do my best to set matters right between us, to meet you more than half-way, to give you, if it were possible, even more freedom than you have now, and not to attempt to claim my position until I had made such a name in London as would render you not ashamed to acknowledge me. To this separation—for such the Australian scheme really is, call it by what name you like—I could not have consented, but it might have been modified in some way, or if you had been kind and gentle with me, I—God knows—I might have gone away. But," she added, speaking slowly, and curling her lip, and looking him full in the face, "when you allow your hard bed and cotton sheets to influence your temper so far as to make you forget, not merely the regard due to me as your wife, but the respect which I should claim as a woman, I meet you on your own ground, and distinctly refuse to accept this offer which you have made me!"

"Oh, you do, do you?" said the major, slowly, giving his legs one vicious switch; "don't let's have any mistake about it this time, let me understand you quite clearly. You refuse?"

"I do!" she cried, exasperated at the mocking tone in which he spoke; "I do, and I tell you so, plainly! Do you think I have been blinded by this pretext for an instant? Do you think that I do not see plainly enough that your object is to rid yourself of me, apparently for a time only, but really for ever?"

"Well, and suppose it were?" he said, quietly.

"Suppose it were!" she echoed; "well, then, I tell you plainly, I would frustrate it. Do you hear? There is a devil I have in me, which once roused renders me a match for you, long-headed and crafty as you are."

"Nice style of woman this, by George,"

muttered Major Vane, low, but loud enough for her to hear.

"If she is not a nice style of woman, she has only you to thank for it," cried Madge. "What she is, you made her, for what she will be, the responsibility will rest on you. If you were a different style of man, I would speak to you in a different way. I would appeal to you, for God's sake, to remember what we are to each other, and to avert this ruin of soul and body, which is overhanging us, by acknowledging me and giving me a portion, a very small portion, of your life. But to you I simply say that I am your wife, that I shall claim the position which the law will award me, and that any attempt of yours to disown or get rid of me will be fruitless and vain."

As she uttered these last words, she emphasised them by stamping her foot and throwing out her hand. It was a natural movement with her; but scarcely had she made it, before she grew hot and flushed, knowing to what taunt she had exposed herself. Philip Vane was much too brutal to neglect such an opportunity.

"Brava, brava!" he cried, clapping his hands softly together. "Deuced good that; always keep your energy for your peroration! You really have improved wonderfully, and I am deuced sorry for Wuff's sake that you decline to astonish—not the natives, but the colonists. Now to business; you have been remarkably candid with me, I will be equally frank with you. In the first place, the fact, which you make such a point of asserting, and which you look upon as your trump card—that I am your husband—would be the very thing which would upset your apple-cart, and ruin your play! I have only to prove that I *am* your husband, and the law, which you were good enough just now to threaten to evoke, will give me the power of forcing you to accept this very excellent offer, which you refuse so contemptuously."

"I don't believe it."

"Exactly. I thought you wouldn't, and unfortunately it isn't a question which we shall be able to bring to any issue, as I don't intend to assert my conjugal rights. You have happened to hit with remarkable dexterity the right nail on the head. I did intend our little separation to be not merely temporary, but final. Oddly enough, I intend it still."

"You may intend it," said Madge, bitterly, "but you cannot carry it out."

"There," said the major, giving his leg a few persuasive taps, "there we differ! I rather think I can! You are my wife—

understand I admit that at once! If, to speak after the pleasant fashion which you have adopted—if you had been another style of woman, I might have been more reserved. I might have introduced a little innocent deception into the matter, have told you, as they do in novels, that our marriage isn't a legal one, either because the parson was a postman in disguise, or that I was a Quaker, while you were a Protestant, or some ingenious stratagem of that kind. But with you I do nothing of the sort; I fully admit the legality of our marriage, while at the same time I bid you a respectful farewell."

"What do you mean?"

"Simply this, that by a method more speedy, more efficacious, and less expensive than any known to your friend the law, I dissolve this marriage between us! And I will be generous enough to let you into my plan, which is as simple as it is excellent. From this day forth you will never look upon me again. I disappear, efface myself, as the French say! Don't ask me how, because I scarcely know myself yet; I may emigrate, I may go abroad, may join Wuff's company as the Bounding Brother of something or other. I don't know what I shall do, but I do know this, that you will never see me again. Listen now, Madge Pierrepont," said he, suddenly changing his tone, "for Madge Pierrepont you are once again. I have been talking in a light tone, but I have meant every word I said, every syllable, by George! Our marriage is known to no one but ourselves, and when we decide upon ignoring it, it is just as though it had never happened. I will never interfere with your plans and projects. I swear that! But on your part you must leave me free! I need say nothing about that, however, for you will have no choice in the matter."

He turned and walked rapidly away, without turning his head. Had he looked round, possibly he might have felt some touch of compunction or compassion, for he would have seen his wife lying senseless on the ground.

OLD SATIRICAL PRINTS.

THE days of the Tudors and the Stuarts were marked by numerous examples of the use of caricatures and satirical prints in illustration of the politics, religious quarrels, dress, amusements, manners, and customs of the people. Such pictorial sketches, and the minor literary productions with

which they were often associated, are valuable as keys to unlock the history of those times. Ballads, broadsheets, monodies, copies of verses, petitions, complaints, short poems, libels, trials, humorous satires, stinging epigrams; together with rude woodcuts, pencil sketches, illuminated headings to manuscripts—all, if viewed aright, are historical memoranda of the greatest interest. Many of these queer old pamphlets and prints admit us in a notable way into a knowledge of the thoughts, habits, diet, peculiarities, homes, gossip, trades, and domestic economy of those who were emphatically the people.

There are, for instance, in the British Museum, rich stores of prints and drawings, some in books, and some on single sheets of paper, full of such suggestive information. We may adduce (without going back to earlier dates) Bateman's *Cristall Glasse of Christian Reformation*; wherein the Godly maye beholde the coloured Abuses used in this our present Time. It is a small pamphlet, published in the early part of the reign of Elizabeth, and adorned with several little homely woodcuts illustrating Sloth, Envy, Gluttony, Wealth, Pride, Vanity, and many other evil things. It tells us something of the religious animosities of that period, that nearly all the persons who are concerned in the evil deeds are represented as popes, priests, monks, and nuns; but apart from this there is a wonderful amount of detail to be picked up relating to dwellings, rooms, furniture, fireplaces, cooking vessels, apparel, and daily usages. There is a broadsheet extant, belonging to a later period of Elizabeth's reign, which illustrates the curious tendency of that age to visit shrews, scolds, and vixens with a mingled punishment of satire and vituperation. Whether those unfavourable specimens of womanhood were relatively more abundant then than they are now, or whether men were more inclined to disparage their wives, are delicate questions to solve; but true it is that satires of this kind were abundant in the days of the Tudors and the Stuarts. The broadsheet warns us thus:

Who marieth a Wife vppon a Monday,
If she will not be good vppon a Tuesday,
Lett him go to y^e Wood vppon a Wednesday,
And cutt him a Cudgell vppon a Thursday,
And pay her soundly vppon a Fryday,
And she mind not, y^e Devil take her a Saturday,
Then he may eat his Meat in peace on y^e Sunday.

The sheet is adorned with seven small woodcuts, representing the scenes thus assigned to the seven days of the week.

Another of the bits of fun or sarcasm

largely indulged in, was the accusing of women of gossiping whenever they met. The old playwrights furnish a profusion of examples; but there is one particular broadsheet worth notice, on account of the amount of information unconsciously given on other subjects. It has a large engraving, with eight pictures or scenes, and thirty-six verses relating to those scenes. The whole is called *Tittle Tattle*; or, the *Several Branches of Gossiping*; and it appears to have been published very near the close of Elizabeth's reign. It lets us into many curious bits of knowledge concerning every-day life, apart from the skit at women, which the artist evidently regarded as the most important matter. The first picture represents a bedroom scene, with several women, a baby, candle-cups, and so forth; in it the gossips sit round an open fire on a tiled hearth, with a hood over it by way of chimney. The second is called *At the Market*. There is a kind of rough shed, to which a miller has brought a mule laden with sacks of corn; other sacks are placed up against posts; a salesman is taking corn out of an open sack to weigh in a balance; several women are standing near, all tattling, and most of them carrying flour-bags under their arms; four more are sitting with vegetables, melons or pumpkins, and other fruit; while others have small hand-baskets. This little rude woodcut tells plainly of the days when housewives bought their own corn, ground their own flour, and made their own bread. At the *Bake Hous* in like manner shows that, though women made the loaves of bread, they had not the facilities for baking at home. Women are assembled, each bringing her lump of dough to be baked into a loaf; a baker is thrusting the dough into his oven, by means of a peel or long-handled wooden shovel, and there is a broom at hand to sweep out the embers of the wood fire with which the oven is heated. There is also a woman bringing in a pasty in a dish to be baked, just as a workman's wife now takes a pie to the bakehouse. In the picture called *At the Ale Hous* there is not so much insight afforded into what may be called domestic life, the satirist being too much engaged in showing women drinking; but the fire outside the *Half Moon*, the benches round the fire, the large flagon, and the lidded noggins, are noteworthy; while an old soldier passing by, with buckler at his back and broadsword over the shoulder, shows how the queen's soldiers were dressed and armed in those

days. Washers at the River tell us of times when laundresses did not use hot water for their cleansing labours (unless indeed the "fine things" were attended to separately at home). Two women are carrying off washed linen in a tub, by means of a pole passing through two handles and resting on their shoulders; a mistress is scolding them, and they are retorting; a woman stands on a stool in the river, beating wet linen with a mallet or wooden bat; another is kneeling on a stool, washing in the river; several women are idling about and chatting; two are fighting, and one is trying to separate them. At the Church the women sit on hassocks at one side of the church, while the men stand on the other side. We may perhaps attribute to the ill-nature of the artist the fact that he represents the preacher as addressing the men, while the women are all looking round about and chattering. There is an hour-glass near or on the pulpit, to enable the preacher to regulate the length of his sermon—clocks inside churches, and even outside, not being very plentiful. At the Hotte Hous introduces us to a women's warm bath; and it would be interesting to know how many there were of such establishments in the Tudor times. Very little mention is made of them by dignified historians; indeed, so far as we are aware, the matter has been left nearly unmentioned through sheer want of knowledge. Be this as it may, here we see the vaulted interiors of two chambers, with dormer openings in a slated roof; the floors are tiled. In one room are several women, in various stages of deshabbille, playing about and gossiping. Towels hang on the wall. In the other chamber, two women are sitting in large tubs; boards, resting on the tubs in front of the women, have food and drink placed on them. That it was a public bath is shown by the sign of the Crown. At the Conditte introduces us to a state of things which prevailed in London before the days of Sir Hugh Myddelton, and prevails still in many country towns. Women are surrounding a circular conduit, gossiping and filling their pails; two are quarrelling and fighting; while a water-carrier is bearing one of those peculiar tall cans in which the water was hawked about.

Coryat's Crudities, published in the early part of the reign of James the First, frequently contained in the early editions engraved frontispieces, which throw a good deal of light on the minor details of life in various countries. Coryat visited France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and the

Netherlands, and jotted down numerous descriptions of what met his view, or, to use his own words, "hastily gobbled up," during a five months' journey. A frontispiece to his book depicts, in one scene, Coryat travelling in a Picardy covered cart drawn by two horses; in a second, crossing a mountain in a chair carried by two men; in a third, rowing in a gondola under the window of a house in Venice, from which a lively lady pelts him with eggs; in another, sleeping in a stable at Bergamo: and so on. Each of these little bits (for they are all very small) tells its story of something real, as that something existed two centuries and a half ago.

In the time of Gustavus Adolphus, a broadsheet appeared in Germany, containing pictures of some Irishmen who served in his army. From this we learn that the men wore long-skirted coats reaching to the knee, a broad bonnet, a loose-sleeved under-coat, a girdle, and full breeches; they carried bows, arrows, swords, and guns. Underneath the picture are some lines in German, bemoaning the troubles which the sins of the country had brought upon her. The Irish legionaries of the invader are described as "hardy and strong, dark-coloured like gipsies, short in stature, eager to fight, furnished with muskets, and skilful in the use of bows and arrows, ready to cut their way with long knives. Their clothes and caps have a barbarous appearance, almost all black; their shoes are chiefly made of, and tied on with, bark of trees. They make shift with little food; if they have no bread, and are hungry, they dig roots out of the earth, with which they are easily appeased." An intelligible picture this of rough-and-ready adventurers, a fighting, or prompt to fight!

James the First, and Charles the First, are well known to have granted patents and monopolies to all kinds of crafty and unworthy persons, and for numerous branches of trade, in return for money payments to replenish the sovereign's purse. Sometimes the manufacture of certain articles, sometimes the retailing, sometimes the importing, sometimes the exporting, were granted to the favoured parties as special monopolies; while in other cases the patentee had a right to claim royalties or percentages on all the sales effected by regular dealers. In this way the list of monopolies became at length enormous. Wine, oil, salt, starch, tin, steel, coals, currants, iron, playing-cards, calf-skin, felts, canvas, ox-shin bones, potash, aniseed, vinegar, aqua-

vitee, brushes, pots, bottles, saltpetre, lead, Latin grammar-books, calamine stone, glass, paper, sulphur, new drapery, dried pilchards—all were subject in divers ways to the operation of this pernicious system. The satirists and artists were not slow to attack the monopolists with pen and pencil. There appears to have been one Alderman Abel, who held a monopoly of some kind for the sale of wine in the City of London. A broadsheet was published about him at a time when he had become enriched by his monopoly. One woodcut represents him at his wine-office in Alderbury Churchyard, while another shows his wife surrounded by the good things of life. The complaining reproaches in the lines beneath the woodcuts are full of little instructive bits: "His wife's shoes must not now shine with the smearing and unsightly unguent of kitchen stuffs, but the purest Blacke that Spaine affords must now cover her happy feet." "Their children must be nursed and brod at Hyegate, and (because the Court breeding is not gentle enough) have select persons on purpose for their better education." "Her manifolde Chaines and Tiffinie Ruffe, without the addition of her Sattin Gowne, Hood, and round beguarded Petticoat, speake her supereminent for a Citie Patron-ship at least." "His patent for the Office of Wine being granted, not a firkin of wine can be conveyed without a ticket from Alderbury Churchyard, but one of this noble Alderman's sprites will prie into it; and, because it wants hallowing with a note, it must be damned to the bottom of his cellar."

The mountebank was a well-known character in streets and fairs in the old days; and humorous prints throw light on many queer sayings and doings connected with the lives of such men. In some cases the broadsheet, or hand-bill of the exhibitor himself, has been preserved. One of these belonged to Hans Buling, a Dutch mountebank well known in London. He was a grotesque-looking fellow, very fantastical in dress, and was attended by a monkey, which he had taught to act the part of a Jack-pudding attendant. Buling himself had once been a Jack-pudding to some other mountebank, and thus well knew the secrets of the craft. His broadsheet represents him bedizened with finery, holding a scroll and a phial; at his feet an ape and a chest of medicines; while his Jack-pudding is coming from behind a curtain. Beneath the picture is an ample versified account of the wonderful cures he can effect, beginning:

See sir, see here,
A doctor rare,
Who travels much at home;
Here take my pills,
I cure all ill,
Past, present, and to come.

Then he goes on to say:

Thousands I've dissected,
Thousands new erected,
And such cures effected,
As none e'er can tell.
Let the palsie shake ye,
Let the chollick rack ye,
Let the crinkum break ye,
Let the murrain take ye,
Take this and you are well.

After much else (unquotable to modern ears) he winds up with the exhortation:

Read, judge, and try,
And if you die,
Never believe me more.

The rogue must have enjoyed the joke contained in the last two lines. Another mountebank, somewhat later in date, caused his portrait to be engraved with the sonorous inscription in dog-Latin: "Magnifico Smokentissimo Custardissimo Astrologissimo Cunningmanissimo Rabbinnissimo Viro Jacko Adams de Clerkenwell Greeno hanc Lovellissimam sui Picturam." Then, in the corner where the painter's and engraver's names are usually placed, there is the further entry, "Hobbedeboooby pinxit et scratchabat." Jack Adams, the cunning man of Clerkenwell Green, is represented in this picture, standing at a table, with a horoscope, an alphabet hornbook, and a Poor Robin's Almanack before him; a tobacco-pipe is sticking in his girdle; a slatternly woman is coming into the room, saying, "Please, sir, can you tell my fortune?"

The complaints by workmen concerning the low rate of wages, and the starvation life of those who make up cheap clothing for slop-sellers, are by no means of recent origin. A broadsheet ballad, about the Commonwealth time, or a little later, is called the Clothier's Delight; or, the Rich Men's Joy and the Poor Men's Sorrow, wherein is expressed the craftiness and subtlety of many clothiers in England, by beating down the workmen's wages:

Combers, weavers, and spinners, for little gains,
Doth earn their money by taking hard pains.

And the broadsheet further tells us that the song is to be "sung to the tune of Jenny come tye me." The woodcuts are on a par with the verses.

If we come to the reign of Charles the Second, we have abundant proof of the strong language used in the broadsheets

and ballads relating to political affairs. When Oliver was dead, and it was safe to abuse him, there appeared such effusions as the following: The English Devil; or, Cromwell and his Monstrous Witch Discover'd at Whitehall: with the Strange and Damnable Speeches of the Hellish Monster, by way of Revelation touching King and Kingdom; with a Narrative of the Infernal Plots, Inhumane Actings, and Barbarous Conspiracies of this Grand Impostor and most Audacious Rebel, that durst aspire from a Brewhouse to the Throne, Washing his Accursed Hands in the Blood of his Royal Sovereign. The title being thus highly spiced, we can well believe that the ballad or effusion itself is not wanting in vituperation.

CAPTURED BY PATAGONS.

A FRENCH traveller, Monsieur A. Guinnard, in order to confirm his countrymen in their innate love of their village steeple, has published an account of what befel him when, in the naughtiness of his heart, he ventured into the wilds of South America.*

Assuredly, Monsieur Guinnard's misfortune was great, and his sufferings as a slave most unusual in kind. The selfish public finds its consolation in the description he gives of tracts of country and half-savage tribes hitherto unseen by Europeans.

He was twenty-three years of age when he went to seek his fortune, in 1855. To reach the place where the streets would be paved with gold, he had to traverse an enormous desert region on foot, in company with an Italian named Pedritto, who had left his home on the same promising errand. How they kept body and soul together, and lost themselves like babes in the wood—except that there was no wood—were long to tell. They went on their way, eating such game as they could catch, not particular whether it were cooked or raw. At last they caught a Tartar, in the shape of a party of Indians, who cut short poor Pedritto's biography, and were about to leave Monsieur Guinnard for dead, when one benevolent savage resolving to spare him, in order to convert him into a domestic animal, stripped him, tied his hands behind him, and set him astride on a fiery steed, no more encumbered with superfluous clothing than himself. This completely stripped condition

continued afterwards to be his invariable and every-day costume. It was a capital plan for preventing his pilfering by hiding small articles in his waistcoat-pocket.

The tribe into whose clutches he had fallen were the Poyuches, who wander along the banks of the Rio Negro from the neighbourhood of the island Pacheco to the foot of the Cordilleras, a mountainous country cut up by deep valleys. After a few months of this vagabond life, no trace of the European was visible in his person. Thus acclimatised, he was sold by the Poyuches to some Puelches, who were staying with them on a visit, for the small price of a horse and an ox. He seems to have been purchased rather as a curiosity than with any hope of his turning out useful. However, the buyers grinned a grin of satisfaction which would have highly diverted him under any other circumstances.

When Turks are unusually angry with a slave, they threaten to sell him. Monsieur Guinnard learned to understand a slave's fear of being sold, and the feeling that makes him rather bear the ills he has, than fly to others that he knows not of. As the Poyuches had done, so did the Puelches; they sold him out of speculation to some eastern Patagons, who seemed likely to treat him with the same tender mercies. People fond of changing horses, often give a one-eyed for a blind one. Monsieur Guinnard's change of masters scarcely promised better results. Nevertheless, this time, he felt less repugnance, as his new owners appeared just a little more human than his previous enslavers. Their stature approached six feet, but their personal type differed little from that of the Puelches. Their bust was long, compared with their legs; on horseback they looked taller than they really were. Their limbs were well-proportioned; their heads large, almost square, flat on the top of the skull, the forehead, and also the chin, projecting, which, combined with a long thin nose, gave them a singular profile.

Continual opportunities of observing the bodily strength of the Patagons enabled their captive, who witnessed their numerous exercises, to feel assured that it greatly surpasses that of Europeans. He saw them adroitly seize with the lasso an untamed horse, pull it up suddenly when at full speed, resist unaided the animal's shock simply by leaning in the opposite direction, until it rolled half-strangled on the ground; and their muscles, while performing these feats, were not more apparent than in their normal state. The physical organisation

* *Trois Ans d'Esclavage chez les Patagons. Récit de Ma Captivité, par A. Guinnard, Membre de la Société de Géographie.*

of the Indians is much superior to that of civilised men. They bear with the greatest ease continued privation and fatigue, during journeys of two or three months which they perform almost without taking rest, galloping on day and night. When they start on a pillaging expedition four or five hundred leagues off, besides the twenty or thirty horses which each man has with him, they take scarcely anything except the lassos, lances, and boleadoras, which they employ both for procuring the means of existence and for fighting. Only the epicures of the party put under the piece of leather, which serves as a saddle, a few slices of salt meat dried in the sun, which they eat with a mixture of horse and beef fat.

According to the accounts of the Patagons in general, the immense desert which lies between the chain of the Andes, the south bank of the Rio Negro, the eastern coast, and the Straits of Magellan, is not, as has been hitherto stated, completely sterile. On the contrary, at least a third of this area is exceedingly fertile, especially the western side and the extreme point of Magellan. Monsieur Guinnard cites with perfect assurance the various places at which he resided, in the neighbourhood of the Andes and of Los Serranos, which are charmingly picturesque and fertile.

Painful as was Monsieur Guinnard's condition, he could not help beholding with pleasure the superb landscapes by which he was surrounded. They would even have afforded him unmixed delight, had they not reminded him of his sad position. Nay, more, he could have fallen in with his masters' mode of life, had not constant ill-treatment aggravated his sorrows, and forced him to anticipate a tragic end. And when sold again, exactly like a passive brute or a beast of burden, he gazed for the last time, with regret, at the lovely scenery which had so often been witness to his tears.

Condemned to live the life of the dumb, his time necessarily passed heavily. The Indians never admitted him to their company, and when his duties called him inside their huts, he was at once brutally driven out. Nor did he wait for the order to be repeated, accompanied as it was by threatening gestures, or by strokes of lassos, which cut his chest and back. He returned to the herd confided to his care, with which he had to remain in all weathers, day and night, sometimes exposed to insupportable heat, his naked body scorched by the summer's sun, or else experiencing

the influences of wind, rain, hail, or frost. In the latter case he suffered horribly from cold and numbness in the hands and feet. Frequently, after passing several hours on horseback, he was obliged, in order to dismount, to seize the mane with his teeth, his hands and feet being perfectly useless, and when he fell upon the ground he felt as if rolling on broken glass. He could not rise until he had given himself a sharp friction of the limbs, after which a rapid run helped to restore the circulation. Could he help brooding over the means of escape?

With all his goodwill he could not perfect himself in the various Patagonian exercises, nor acquire the skill they required of him. He was, therefore, all but worthless in their eyes. Consequently, they sold him to some Pampeans, who paid them a visit after several invasions of the Buenos Ayrian territory. The price paid this time for the biped animal was several horses and a few pieces of common cloth, coloured black or red.

His new proprietors were curious to know what motive had induced him to leave his native land. He answered that he quitted Europe because he had some ambition, and because in his country the extent of space is so restricted, compared with the number of the population, that only a few individuals succeed in acquiring an independent existence, or even easy circumstances. That money being the principal mover of all things in civilised countries, every one tries to get as much as possible by the exercise of some special industry, but that the majority barely earn enough for their wants. That, like him, hundreds of thousands of Europeans submit to voluntary exile every year, in the hope of realising, in a short space of time, sufficient profits either to place them out of the reach of want, or to enable them to lead a life of pleasure. Finally, he added, that the hope of winning the smiles of fortune, and the desire to be able to assist his family, had sufficed to make him leave the mother country.

The interpreter, after communicating this reply to his companions (who laughed as if in pity with shrugs of their shoulders), answered that, since chance had thrown him amongst them, any care for the future was superfluous. That he had no need to work to eat, and that his family would manage to do without him, because they would never see him again. That he would lead a happy life with them, although, in truth, they promised neither house nor clothing to protect him from the

severity of the seasons. That the earth, wet or dry, the rocks, or the grass, would be by turns his bed. That he would get used to this sort of life, just as well as they did, for he seemed to be made exactly as they were, and that they would treat him well, in proportion as they found him faithful and serviceable. To sum up the whole, he added, by way of moral, that Christians are fools—ouèsalmas—imbeciles—pofos—to labour for gold, and to cover themselves from head to foot with inconvenient, extraordinary, and unhealthy clothing, which, to judge from its appearance, must give a deal of trouble to fabricate.

Amongst the South American Indians, every family, and even every man, believes himself absolutely free. They live completely independent of each other; nevertheless, in spite of those habits and ideas, the Poyuches, the Pampeans, and the Mamouelches, as well as the Patagons, are divided into a great number of tribes. Their intestine wars, besides those against the Hispano-Americans, so frequently compromise their liberty, that they have been driven, out of sheer necessity, to form themselves into societies more or less numerous. They choose chiefs or caciques, whom they regard as their fathers and directors, rather than their masters, with whom they remain, or whom they quit, according to their pleasure.

The variations of the climate of the Pampas are exceedingly regular, consisting mainly in a great difference of summer and winter temperature. The latter is almost as cold as December in France. There is no snow, but every morning the ground is covered with hoar frost. The ice is never more than an inch and a half thick. On the other hand, the summer is oppressively hot. The horses and wild oxen which people the plains indulge, like the human inhabitants, in a siesta, which seems to all a repose as natural as necessary. But throughout the Pampas there are considerable atmospheric differences. In the Mamouelches regions, which are wooded, the air is extremely dry. No trace of perspiration is to be seen on any creature whatever. Animals, killed by the heat, lie entire on the arid plains, dried in their skin. But in the latitude of Buenos Ayres, where the finest possible lucerne abounds, the vegetation clearly demonstrates the moisture of the climate. Dead animals putrefy rapidly, and wounds are difficult to heal. Yet in spite of this constant humidity the Indians sleep with impunity on the naked ground, almost unclad.

The stature of the Pampeans is inferior to that of the Puelches and the Patagons. With a few exceptions, they are seldom more than five feet eight or nine inches high. Their hue is the darkest of all these Indians, being deep olive-brown; some even are almost black. Their skin is exceedingly fine all over their bodies—soft, like satin, and almost as brilliant. They exhale a peculiar odour, which, though less powerful than that of negroes, is still more so than that of Europeans. Their skin becomes more shining, and slightly oily, under the action of the sun, as was easily ascertained by the touch. They tie up their hair over the top of the head, with a strip of stuff or a strap of leather; but in battle they let it hang loose over their face, to avoid seeing the dangers which may threaten them.

The gait of all Indian women is exceedingly ungraceful; that of the Pampeans is especially so, brought on by their seating themselves, through a sense of decency, in a manner different to the men, who squat in Oriental fashion, with their legs crossed under them. They bend the left leg, with the point of the foot resting on the ground, then they seat themselves upon the heel, and pass the right leg over the left thigh, taking care to put the right foot flat beside the left, in order thereby to be able to keep their crossed legs in equilibrium. This fatiguing posture, to which they are accustomed from their infancy, brings on a curious disfigurement of the left hip, turning the leg inwards, and causing them to halt on the left side. Their hands are small, well made, and rarely thin; their joints, as those of the men, are clean; their feet also are small, but broad. If their ~~are~~ ^{are} not beautiful, they announce at least ~~their~~ ^{their} strength. The richest, or the most considered amongst them, wear a leather collar three fingers broad, and very tight, garnished outside with discs, or half-beads of metal, which they fabricate themselves. The breadth and stiffness of this singular ornament, which might very well serve for a Newfoundland dog's collar, gives a most comical aspect to the wearer's dignified face.

The Pampean women are very active and very attentive to their husbands, to whose exactions they submit without a murmur. Those worthies devote to complete repose all the time which is not occupied by the chase or in taming their horses. In their changes of residence, it is the women who undertake to transport all the household goods. They load the

horses, and saddle their 'husbands' and afterwards their own, on which they then instal themselves with three or four children. With this equipage, they assemble the herd and drive it before them with the lances of their lords and masters, who, mounted on their best coursers, with no other burden than their lassos and their boleadoras, indulge on the way in the pleasures of the chase, without appearing to bestow the least thought on their family, however great may be their attachment to their children. Arrived at their destination, it is again the women who unload the horses and hasten to pitch the tents, under whose shelter the husbands stretch themselves, while their helpmates prepare the food. The Pampeans, for whom horse exercise is obligatory, usually mount at a single bound into the wooden saddles which encase their coursers' head and chest. The richest only, or the luckiest in pillaging, saddle their horses after the Gaucho fashion. The women ride on horseback, in the same way as the men, only their saddles are completely different, being veritable scaffoldings composed of seven or eight sheepskins, surmounted by a couple of rolls of rushes. To climb up into this apparatus, they make use of a stirrup hung round the horse's neck.

Amongst all the wild tribes through whom Monsieur Guinnard passed, marriage, as with civilised peoples, is considered as an important act and the source of an honourable and happy life. It is contracted under the form of a traffic or an exchange of the women for divers goods and animals. When an Indian wishes to get married and has cast his eyes on any girl in the neighbourhood, he visits in turn all his relations and friends, confides to them his desire, and begs their assistance in carrying out his project. Each one, according to his degree of relationship or friendship, gives his advice and his approbation in a long discourse suited to the circumstance, adding weight to his words by some acceptable gift, such as horses, oxen, silver stirrups or spurs, or pieces of stuff the proceeds of pillage.

Ill-treatment of wives is perfectly allowable, when based upon infidelity. The husband may even put his wife to death, as well as her accomplice; but generally his avarice induces him to keep his wife and exact damages from the delinquent, who has the right to ransom his life when he has the means. From the moment when the injured spouse has received satisfaction, he has no right to reproach his wife by the slightest allusion to her fault. Her

family would be allowed to interfere were he to ill-treat her again on that account. Condonation is accepted by Indian, as well as by English law.

Children, amongst these primitive people, are not nearly so numerous as might be expected. The life of a new-born babe is submitted to the decision of the father and mother—whether it shall be suffered to exist or not. If their judgment is favourable, it instantly becomes the object of its parents' love, who at need would submit to the greatest privations to gratify its slightest wants or its most wilful caprices; for children are spoiled all the world over. They stretch their pretty darling on a sort of little ladder, which supplies the place of a cradle. The upper part of its tiny person reposes on staves fixed close together, and covered with a sheepskin, whilst the lower part of its body sinks into a sort of cavity formed by staves placed below the sides of the ladder.

This curious cradle is longer than the infant by a foot, at each extremity. To the four corners are attached leather straps, which serve to suspend it during the night over the parents, who can rock it, by means of a thong, without disturbing themselves. Every morning, the babes are set at liberty during the space of time necessary for cleaning them. When the sun shines, the mother lays them on a sheepskin, to imbibe strength from the source of life and motion. In rainy weather, fixed in their ladder, they are set upright against one of the poles of the tent. Mamma squats opposite, admiring their beauties and frequently giving them either the breast, or little bits of raw meat, which they suck down greedily.

The women suckle their babes till they are three years; if, during that time, they give birth to others, they suckle both, or all, without apparent injury to either party. The slightest whims of these little tyrants are law for the parents and their friends. As observed just now, the spoiling of children is a cosmopolitan weakness. Scarcely do these precocious urchins begin to drag themselves about on their hands and knees, when they are allowed to handle knives and other sharp weapons, and to use them against any one who crosses them. "Pretty dears!" exclaim the delighted parents, "they'll make famous enemies of Christians."

One of Monsieur Guinnard's servile functions was to serve as a butt to these youthful tormentors. His duty was to practise complete submission to the children, whose pleasure it was to inflict on him all sorts of

cruelties. Sometimes they pelted him with stones from their slings, or threw their boleadoras round his body, or when they were on horseback caught him with a lasso, and dragged him after them at full gallop—all to the great satisfaction of their honoured parents, who thought no more of his bleeding wounds than they would of a horse's broken knees.

After this, can we wonder that the unhappy captive resolved to escape at the risk of his life? He did escape. How, the reader may learn from a translation (which the writer has not seen) of Monsieur Guinard's narrative, published by Messrs. Bentley and Son.

THE FOURFOLD ASPECT.

THE lovers stood in the deep recess
Of the old ancestral hall,
Where the storied panes their gold and red
Flung o'er the grace of her bending head,
As he whispered "Nothing on earth is bliss
Like a silent hour, such as this,
With the soft hush over all."

The children played on the flowery lawn,
Darting from glade to walk;
"And see," they said as they glanced above,
To the two, in their glorious trance of love.
"How Maud and Charlie waste the day,
Though night is coming to stop our play,
And they do not even talk!"

With her weary eyes and her sable robes,
The lonely lady passed;
A sudden cloud her pale face crossed,
The anguish of one who has loved and lost;
Then, from laughing babes and dreaming pair,
She turned, with the tearful gentle prayer,
"God, long may their sunshine last!"

The old men glanced from the lighted hearth,
Where they sat over cards and wine,
To the two, unconscious of aught the while,
But love and each other—then shrug and smile,
As one, draining his glass, said—"As they choose,
But yon blaze is better than chill night dews;
Your trick, and the deal is mine."

The twilight deepened into night,
The stars through the dusk air shone,
Aged and infants calmly slept,
O'er a bright-eyed portrait the mourner wept,
And the lovers still murmured, "Not yet, not yet,
Ah why should such hours in parting set!"
And so the old world rolls on.

A TRIP TO THE LAND OF SCOTT. PART III.

THE city arms of Glasgow were evidently designed by an amateur unproficient in the scientific mysteries of heraldry, and consist of a bush with a bird upon it, a bell hanging from the bough, and a fish, not at all rampant, and supposed to be a herring. Some local poet has written in reference to this odd emblazonment:

This is the tree that never sprang,
This is the bird that never sang,
This is the bell that never rang,
This is the fish that never swam, &c.

The motto underneath this device was, "Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the Word." Though the Scotch are eminently a polemical and theological, they are none the less eminently a trading people, and at some time during the last century the commercial element got the mastery in this little epigraph, and excluded the theological. The motto now stands, "Let Glasgow flourish." And Glasgow does flourish, thanks to the abundant coal and iron of Lanarkshire, to the enterprise of the people, and to its commanding situation on the Clyde. The river, however, did comparatively little for it until within the last sixty or seventy years. Before that time there was scarcely more than five feet depth of water at the Broomielaw; at the present time there is a depth of twenty-five feet, allowing the largest class of vessels to load and unload within the city boundaries. The far-seeing and energetic men who proposed, and their successors who have carried out, the improvement of the Clyde, from the Broomielaw downwards to the point where the river becomes an estuary, have been the means of raising Glasgow from the position of a small and unprogressive country town to that of the second city in the empire, for population, enterprise, and wealth. Their efforts were aided, no doubt, by the great mineral wealth of all the near-lying districts, but none the less praise is due to them for their sagacity and public spirit. The traveller who seeks more health, recreation, fine scenery, and change of air as excuses for leaving home, will find but little to detain him in this dingy metropolis; but the social philosopher and the man of business will discover at any time something to interest and instruct them. The old city of Glasgow, like old Edinburgh, without the advantage of its picturesque station, is ill-built, over-crowded, and abounds with narrow streets, lanes, "wynds," and "vennels," the hot-beds of filth, malaria, fever, as well as vice and crime. But new Glasgow, extending westwards from the Exchange, and beyond Kelvin Grove, to Gilmore Hill, and, still pushing itself westward, is one of the finest cities in Great Britain. It covers a series of gently-swelling hills, and contains miles of stone-built and handsome streets, squares, crescents, and terraces, with many ecclesiastical, civic, and commercial buildings of the highest order of architectural merit. As regards the old town, the antiquary will perhaps take a look at the beautiful cathedral, lately restored, and the man of literary taste will, if he have time,

stray into the "Saut Market," for the sake of Rob Roy and Bailie Nichol Jarvie, taking care, if he be wise, to be provided with some aromatic vinegar, or a piece of camphor, to protect him from the many "athletic stinks" that are likely to grasp him by the nose as he passes along. This done, he will turn to the Clyde and its ship-building establishments, as the sight above all others which renders Glasgow remarkable. The first sight of the river, dank, oozy, slushy, and as foul-smelling as the Salt Market, can scarcely fail to suggest to his mind that the municipality of Glasgow has sadly neglected its duty in not having expended about half or a quarter as much money in purifying the river as the Clyde trustees have spent in deepening, dredging, and embanking it. If there be in the world a filthier river than the Thames was before the main drainage works were constructed, that river is the Clyde, which receives all the refuse and pollution of half a million of people, pollution which is kept in a continual state of churn, by the paddle-wheels and screws of one of the busiest and most crowded ports in Europe. There are no engineering difficulties to prevent the work; it is nothing but a question of money, which Glasgow can well spare, even were the purpose of its expenditure of far less importance than the life and health of its citizens, both rich and poor.

The sail from Glasgow to Oban, in the land of Lorne, occupies a long summer day, and compels the traveller to rise betimes if he would lose no portion of the enjoyment, which all who make the trip anticipate, and in which few, if any, are disappointed, unless Highland mist, thick and opaque, shuts up the view. But this seldom happens in the summer, and such mists as occasionally arise and settle upon the side or the crests of the great Bens, if they detract from the beauty, enhance the sublimity of the landscape. Stepping aboard the *Iona* at the Broomielaw, the acknowledged pride of the river, and the finest steamer of the fine fleet that the enterprising David Hutcheson has placed at the disposal of all who travel for pleasure or necessity between Glasgow, the West Highlands, and the inner and outer Hebrides, we start down the Clyde punctually at six in the morning. In less than ten minutes we thread our way through the crowded river, and behold, on the east side of us, the busy yards of the iron ship-builders by whose skill and enterprise the reputation of the Clyde-built ships has been carried to every part of the world. The ribs of the iron leviathans on the

stocks loom large and heavily as we pass; and the docile monsters, which are hereafter to visit all parts of the globe, laden with merchandise and passengers, and sometimes on the less agreeable errands of war and destruction, stand before us in all stages of development. The ship-building industry of the Thames seems to have emigrated to the Clyde, determined to remain there. Everybody knows the fact; and the ship-builders of London, workmen as well as masters, have reason to deplore it. In this, as in all similar cases, where a trade or manufacture leaves its usual seat for another, the reason is chiefly to be found in the conduct or organisation of the workmen. The operative ship-builders of London demand more wages than the men of Glasgow; do less work in a given space of time; and encumber the trade with a greater number of regulations injurious to the masters. The result is that ships can be cheaper and more expeditiously constructed in the Clyde than in the Thames; and that trade, true to its instincts as the needle to the pole, flies to the spot where the largest profits can be made with the least risk and the greatest certainty. Doubtless the coal and iron that lie at the very doors of the Clyde ship-builders, and have not to be transported from distances of a hundred or two hundred miles, as is the case with those who ply their industry on the Thames, is one reason why Glasgow wins the day; but the main and paramount reason is, the demand of the Thames workman for a wage that he does not really earn, aided by the inability of the English workman to live as comfortably on his larger wage as the Scotsman on a smaller one. And this latter question is not one of the cost of subsistence so much as of management. The English workman's wife is, in nine cases out of ten, a woman of very imperfect or of no education, who knows next to nothing of domestic economy, and whose principal idea of cooking is to take a joint to the neighbouring baker, and have it baked in his oven without trouble to herself, and who knows not how to make soups, broths, stews, or savoury dishes, or how to convert a pound of meat, by the aid of vegetables and condiments, into a dish satisfying alike to the palates and stomachs of three or four, or even half a dozen people. The Scottish women of the same class are much better instructed, and can do as much with half a crown in the sustenance of their families, without stinting them, as an Englishwoman can with four or five shillings.

On the left of the river, after passing the last of the great ship-building yards, and getting beyond hearing of the incessant hammering against the iron ribs of the future leviathans of the deep, stands the little town of Renfrew, which gives the title of baron to the Prince of Wales. Inland a few miles may be seen the spires of the busy manufacturing town of Paisley, that was almost ruined a few years ago by the fiat of the great goddess Fashion, who decreed that ladies should wear mantles, instead of the shawls for which Paisley is celebrated. But, after a hard struggle, Paisley surmounted its difficulty, remembering, in the day of its adversity, that other articles of dress besides shawls might be made of fine wool, and that tartans and many choice and tasteful fabrics of the loom might be worn otherwise than on the shoulders. Near this point the Clyde gradually widens, and by the time we reach Kilpatrick, the birthplace of the patron saint of Ireland, it begins to assume the appearance of an estuary. The Irish vehemently deny that the saint was a Scotsman; but as, up to the seventh or eighth century, the western Scotch and the eastern Irish were but one people, and are to this day of one race and closely related language, there is no need why the Irish should think it a point of honour or of duty to maintain that the saint was born on the banks of the Liffey or the Shannon, and not on those of the Clyde.

Beyond Kilpatrick is Dunglas, the "grey hill," near to which are the remains of an ancient Roman fort, marking the western extremity of the old Roman wall from the Forth to the Clyde, commonly called by the country people "Graham's Dyke." On a rock by the river-side a monument has been erected to the memory of Henry Bell—one of the pioneers of steam navigation—who, in the year 1812, navigated the first steamer whose paddles ever disturbed the waters of the Clyde. In close proximity is the village of Bowling, the entrance to the canal that connects the Clyde with the Forth. On the opposite shore stands Erskine House, the seat of Lord Blantyre, a member of the great clan, sept, or house of the Stuarts, and then we come within sight of the most prominent and picturesque object on the river, the noble rock and castle of Dumbarton, the Balcutha of Ossian. The rock not only commands the passage of the Clyde, hence its Gaelic name, but the town of Dumbarton, and the passage to Loch Lomond and the Highlands by the Vale and Water of the

Leven. It is about nine hundred feet in height, columnar and almost perpendicular in some parts, and is split into two summits, at the base of, and between which, stands the castle. The place was once of great military importance, and as such played its part for centuries in the troublous history of Scotland. Its chief interest in the present day concentrates in the fact that it was the prison of Sir William Wallace before he was betrayed to the English by "the fause Menteith." Forty or fifty years ago (authorities differ as to the exact date) some fishermen, dredging in the river opposite the rock, drew up a great double-handed sword, such as Wallace, according to tradition, was accustomed to wield, and of a weight and size that would have over-taxed any of his contemporaries. It was immediately asserted, and believed, that this was the identical sword of Wallace, which possibly, and very probably, it was. The relic is preserved with great veneration in the castle, and shown to the few tourists who care to visit the fortress. Dumbarton, under the name of Balcutha or Alcluth, was the capital of the Strathclyde Celts, and is mentioned as a strong place by the "venerable Bede." But the strength of the position is wholly due to the rock, for the town itself lies low, and might, in former days of bloodshed and civil broil, have been easily taken in the rear. At one time a stronger enemy than man appears to have endangered its security, for in the year 1606 the inhabitants petitioned King James the First to come to their relief against the inroads of the Clyde, which is here almost as broad as the Thames at Sheerness, declaring that "the surges and inundations of the sea were likely to destroy and tak' away their hail town, and could na be repulsit by nae means that their poor ability and fortunes were able to furnish." It required thirty thousand pounds Scots (fifteen hundred pounds sterling) to make a proper bulwark against the waters. A singular adventure at Dumbarton rock, interesting to military men, that finds a place in the chequered history of poor Queen Mary, happened in 1571, when the place was in possession of a body of her partisans. One Crawford, of Jordan Hill, an officer of the Regent Lennox, being foiled in the attempt to capture the fortress, resolved, with a small body of followers, to surprise the garrison in the dead of night, by scaling the almost perpendicular side of the rock by the aid of ladders. All went well for a time, but a

singular accident threatened, at the last moment, to defeat this daring project. One of the escalading party, when more than half-way up the ladder, was seized with a fit of epilepsy. Had he fallen to the ground the alarm would have been given to the garrison. What was to be done? Crawford of Jordan Hill, with a fertility in expedients which marked him for a born general, hit upon a remedy. Immediately, and before the man had time to drop, he had him securely fastened by the hands and feet to the ladder on which he stood. This done, the ladder was turned, and his comrades marched over him in safety, gained the summit, and captured the unsuspecting garrison.

On the left, below Dumbarton, stands the little town of Port-Glasgow, so called in the days before the Clyde was deepened up to the Broomielaw, and when large vessels, bringing tobacco to the Glasgow merchants from Virginia and the other American plantations, were compelled for want of water to drop anchor and unload their cargoes. The place has long since lost most of its importance, and the merchandise which keeps Port-Glasgow alive is lumber, or timber, from the Canadian forests. The industry of wooden ship-building having to a great extent been displaced in Glasgow by that of iron, Port-Glasgow has given it refuge, and turns into ships and boats of a smaller kind much of the good timber that Canada sends to it.

Two miles beyond Port-Glasgow, and on the same shore of the ever-widening Firth, is the prosperous town of Greenock, where once upon a hill, in the days of the Druidic Celts, stood a rude temple of the sun; hence comes its Gaelic name, Grian-knock, or hill of the sun. Celtic philologists are of opinion that Greenwich, on the Thames, derives its name from the same period, and from the same verbal root, and considering the astronomical purpose and fame of the hill at Greenwich, the derivation seems singularly happy. Greenock was the birthplace of that hard-headed Scotsman and benefactor of his kind, James Watt. The steam which he did more than any man before him to utilise, has done much for his native town, and at no time in the day, or scarcely at night, is the roar of the funnel silent, or the paddle-wheel at rest at the busy quay. The view over the Clyde from this vantage ground is singularly grand and varied. The Highland hills, among which Lomond, the Cobbler, Argyll's Bowling Green, and Ben Gail, are conspicuous, together with a

score of others, trace their outlines against the sky, and the sea pours in among them in a series of lochs, each of which is a thing of beauty and a joy to those who love the solitude of the mountains. But of the mountains only, for the solitude of the lochs and glens of the Clyde is banished by the constant inpouring crowd of the citizens of smoky Glasgow, who have lined the whole shore with villas, villages, and towns, where they place their wives and children during the summer and autumnal months, to find health and recreation, and where they join their family circles as often as work and time allow. Opposite is the town of Helensburgh, which, lit up by gas, sends at night a torrent of radiance over the Firth, suggesting the idea of a fairy city, and all along the coast-line a succession of smaller, though similar places, testify alike to the wealth that can afford to build, and to the populousness that can occupy such far-stretching and beautiful suburbs. The Iona puts in to the quay of Greenock to take up such Glasgow passengers as know the river too well to care for losing time in the voyage, or who are so busy as to value the hour and a half which they can save by taking the rail. Thus reinforced in numbers we speed onwards to Rothesay and the Kyles of Bute. On the left we pass the picturesque town of Gourock, and the Cloch or Clach Lighthouse, and on the right the entrances to the Gare Loch, and the pleasant village of Roseneath, Loch Long, the Holy Loch, and the villages of Strone Point, Kilmun, the Kilm, Dunoon, and others. Rounding Toward Point and Toward Castle, the ancient residence of the Lamonts, a semi-Highland family of once great renown, we come in sight of Rothesay, the first place of historical note at which the steamer touches. The town gives, like Renfrew, a title to the Prince of Wales, but one of higher rank, that of duke, formerly borne by the elder sons of the kings of the House of Stuart. It stands on the island of Bute, at the entrance of the famous Kyle, erroneously called Kyles, a narrow sea channel that separates the islands from the mainland of Cowal, in Argyllshire. The climate of Rothesay is as mild as that of Torquay, and it is consequently a favourite resort of such invalids as are too delicate to bear unscathed the icy blasts of winter on the eastern coast of the island. The temperature is as favourable to vegetable as to animal life, and roses flourish at Rothesay—pronounced not inappropriately “Rosy” by the Gaelic population—long

after the other roses of Scotland, except those in greenhouses, have strewn their blossoms upon the ground. The fuchsia more especially seems to delight in the air and soil of Rothesay, lasts far into the winter, and attains a height equal to that of the lilacs, the acacias, and the laburnums, with which the suburban Londoners of the well-to-do classes love to adorn their villas.

Rothesay Castle, of which the ruins still remain, was once the royal palace of the early kings of the Stuart race. It was attacked and taken by Haaco, king of Norway, in his ill-fated expedition for the subjugation of Scotland in the year 1263, though the total defeat which he suffered shortly afterwards at Largs, on the opposite coast of Ayrshire, at the hands of the brave young King Alexander and his patriotic nobles, rendered his conquest of no value. King Robert the Third resided here when his eldest son, the Duke of Rothesay, was murdered by his uncle, the Duke of Albany, in the castle of Falkland; and here the old king breathed his last, broken-hearted by this and subsequent calamities. Cromwell's soldiers had a shot against this, as against so many other old feudal castles, both in Scotland and Ireland, and did it what the Scotch call "muckle skaith." But the final blow was given to it during the civil wars of the Solemn League and Covenant, when one of the great Clan Campbell, younger brother of the MacCallum or MacCoillin More, at the head of a covenanting force, reduced it to the state of ruin in which it now lies.

The sail through the Kyles is a favourite excursion. The scenery is picturesque rather than grand, though if the traveller looks beyond the comparatively low shores of the island of Bute to the mountain summits of its sister isle of Arran, the craggy peaks of Goatfell (or in Gaelic, Ben Gaoith, the "hill of the winds"), he will find the element of sublimity which Bute itself does not supply. The Kyles—the name occurs in other parts of Scotland, as at Kyle Akea and Kyle Rhea, and again in the New World, between Staten Island and the state of New Jersey, where the passage is called the "kill"—are seldom wider than the Thames at Gravesend, but are indented by several small lochs, among which Loch Streven and Loch Ridden are conspicuous for their beauty. At the entrance to the latter is a small rocky island, called Eilangreig, on which that luckless MacCallum More, who took part with the Duke of Monmouth in the famous rebellion against the crown and

dignity of the bigoted James the Second, deposited five thousand stand of arms and three hundred barrels of gunpowder, under the charge of a little garrison of one hundred and fifty men of the Clan Campbell. On the collapse of the rebellion, and the subsequent execution of Argyll and Monmouth, the stores were seized by the British Government, and the little fort that stood upon the island was demolished.

After threading for an hour and a half the apparent mazes and seemingly land-locked waters of the Kyles, and watching from the deck the gambols of countless swarms of many-coloured medusæ or jelly-fish, in their calm, transparent element, beautiful disc-like creatures, without sight or hearing, but full of electric life, and counting during the last half-hour, in which a succession of rapid showers had broken over the vessel, at least a score of rainbows on the land and on the sea, we turn the point of Ardlamont, and find ourselves at the entrance of that Loch Fyne, famous alike for its beauty and its herrings, of which we made the acquaintance at Inverary, its remotest extremity. We are not, however, bound for Inverary this time, but for Ardrishaig and Loch Gilp. The scenery is wilder and more imposing than in the Kyles. On the right hand is the Cowal district of Argyllshire, and on the left that of Knapdale and Cantyre. To avoid the voyage round the long projecting Mull of Cantyre—a voyage never taken by pleasure steamers—we make for the entrance of the Crinan Canal, and thus, by a narrow cut of nine miles across the peninsula, save a circuit of at least a hundred round one, of the stormiest headlands in Great Britain, upon which breaks the full vehemence of the Atlantic tides. Passing West Tarbet, where the normal width of the isthmus is reduced to two miles by the inroad made upon the land by Loch Tarbet streaming up from the ocean, we catch a glimpse, on the barren and rocky shore, of the ruins of an old keep erected by Robert Bruce. It was at one time contemplated to construct a second canal at this narrow pass; and when we consider the yearly increasing prosperity of the Highlands, and the constant stream of traffic that flows into them when the day approaches when the grouse may be lawfully slain by the sport-loving Sassenachs, it seems remarkable that so small, but so highly useful a work, has not been undertaken.

Arrived at Ardrishaig, we bid farewell to the Iona, and are transported, bag and

baggage, in a small steamer through the canal to Loch Crinan, where another fast and commodious steamer of Mr. Hutcheson's fleet lies in waiting for us, with steam up, and ready to start immediately upon our arrival. The track boat was drawn by horses until within the last few years. The hale and hearty among the passengers generally prefer to walk the distance, rather than be shut up in the boat during the weary passage through no less than fifteen locks, and it is no doubt the wiser plan to leave the little steamer to pass the locks at its leisure, and walk on to the inn at Cairnban, where the traveller of moderate pedestrian powers will arrive as soon as the boat, and have time to spare for the "needful refreshment" which the law in Scotland allows to all travellers on all days, not even excepting the Sabbath. Such refreshment seldom amounts to more than whisky and oat-cake, with butter or cheese; but as travellers eat and drink more from idleness and want of something else to do, than from hunger and thirst, the inn at Cairnban generally receives visits from more than half of the passengers every time the boat arrives. The canal is in many parts constructed above the level of the surrounding plain, which it requires no great amount of geological study to believe was once a continuation of Loch Crinan, and over which, at some early period in the history of our planet, the waters extended to the bases of the circumjacent hills. The country is rich in pasturage, and the beautiful little black-faced sheep and the black cattle, for both of which the Highlands are noted, bespeak the agricultural wealth of the neighbouring farmers and proprietors. The canal is fed with water from the uplands on the left bank; and one of the reservoirs, high up among the hills, suddenly burst, four or five years ago, and the water rushed down into the canal, bearing with it an irresistible torrent of rocks and stones, which destroyed the banks for nearly half a mile; put an end to the navigation for a whole season, and flooded a large portion of the lowland grazings in the ancient basin of Loch Crinan. The accident, however, was not allowed to stop the traffic, and omnibuses supplied the place of the canal steamer, and got over the distance in much less time. The remains of this great eruption of the waters still cover the hill-side from which the torrent rushed, and presents the appearance of a river of stone.

From the new point of embarkation at Crinan, to the busy little port and town of

Oban, the scenery is far finer than anything we have previously passed, and opens up, in a long succession of ever-varying grandeur, a panorama of land and sea, of rock and mountain, and rugged isles, such as cannot be surpassed anywhere in Europe, unless it be still further north and west to Skye, and the shores of Ross and Sutherland; or, still further north, to the rugged Atlantic seaboard of Norway. But even when travelling amid scenery which is the most magnificent in the world, the sound of the dinner-bell has an attraction for the great majority of tourists—greater than that of inanimate nature. The dinner-bell rings within a few minutes after the departure of the steamer, and creates a temporary conflict in the mind between the love of the beautiful and the love of beef. Beef generally wins the day; for the all-sufficient reason with most people that now or never is the time for dinner; that much time need not be spent over it; and that at the utmost it is but taking half an hour out of the three that the voyage occupies, leaving ample time for the enjoyment of the scenery. Resuming our places on deck as speedily as possible, and looking behind us, as the vessel cleaves its way towards Oban, we see the triple hills, known as the Paps of Jura, raising their rocky ramparts above the clouds of mist that swathe their middles like a belt. Skirting along the lower shore of the same island for many miles, we reach an opening to the Atlantic between Jura and the huge uninhabited mountain, or island, of Scarba. Beyond this passage, not visible in calm weather, but easily discernible by the telescope when the wind blows fresh, is the famous whirlpool of Corryvreckan, a name of terror to mariners. "On the shores of Argyllshire," writes Campbell, the author of the two immortal poems, the *Battle of the Baltic* and the *Mariners of England*, "I have often listened to the sound of this vortex at the distance of many leagues. When the weather is calm, and the roar of the adjacent sea can scarcely be heard on those picturesque shores, its sound, which is like the sound of innumerable chariots, creates a magnificent effect." The author of the old *Statistical Account of Scotland* describes the whirlpool with more particularity. "The gulf," he says, "is most awful with the flowing tide. In stormy weather, with that tide, it exhibits an aspect in which a great deal of the terrible is blended. Vast openings are formed in which one might think the bottom might be seen; immense bodies of

water tumbling as if over a precipice, then rebounding from the abyss, they dash together with inconceivable impetuosity, and rise foaming to a prodigious height above the surface. The noise of this conflict is heard through all the surrounding islands." This pool is represented in a popular tradition to be the abode of a kelpie, or water spirit, who sometimes in the shape of a gallant knight, mounted on a white steed, formed of the sea foam, rides on the waves to the land, and makes love in the villages to fickle maidens, who do not know his real character, but whose imaginations are excited by his seeming beauty, and whose ears are tickled by his cozening speeches. Such maidens, however, are warned by the legend to beware of mounting behind the fascinating wooer on his jaunting jennet, a feat to which he is sure to invite them. If they consent, he rides with them over the roughest waves of the sea, and drowns them at last in the terrible whirlpool.

After leaving Scarba in the rear, the course of the steamer lies through a seemingly intricate passage of countless islands, great and small, that cluster within five or six miles of the mainland of Lorne. Among the most conspicuous are Luing, or the Isle of Ships, Sail, Shuna, Lunga, and Easdale, some of them uninhabited, but yielding succulent pasturage to the flocks and herds of the farmers on the mainland during the summer months. Easdale contains a considerable population, who live by working the slate quarries belonging to the estate of the Earl of Breadalbane. To the left, looking seaward, rise the grand mass of Ben More, in Mull, and the bold craggy outline of the shores of that large, little known, and all but primitive island. The evening sun, as it sets behind Ben More—supposed to be haunted by a potent witch—throws a curtain of deep rich purple over all the eastern landscape, and lights up sea and rock, and shore and glen, with such colours as none but a Turner, or one of equal genius, would dare to imitate upon canvas for fear of being accused of extravagance. The steamer, passing Easdale, keeps close in shore to the coast of Lorne, of which the bold cliffs seem to assume new shapes at every turn; here a crag embattled like a fortress, here a projecting headland, running sheer into the water, and there a precipice, so split and riven as to suggest the time when the rocks were molten in the fire, and hardened into mountains as they cooled. To this wild scene succeed the more placid and pastoral regions, where the beautiful

green island of Kerrera, famous in Scottish history, shelters the placid bay of Oban, where stands the little town that is to be our terminus for a few days. Early in the thirteenth century, King Alexander the Second determined to expel the Danes and Norwegians from the north and east of Scotland, and to plant his standard on the furthest cliffs of Thurso. For this purpose he assembled a fleet in the bay of Oban, and an army in the green vale of Kerrera, but taking a fever, he died without accomplishing the grand object. At a later period (1263), when the redoubtable Haco, King of Norway, resolved upon the conquest of the south of Scotland, he assembled a fleet of one hundred and sixty vessels for the purpose in this capacious and safe anchorage:

Music and rejoicing followed on their way;
Every sailor in the fleet felt his heart with pleasure
beat,
Every soldier in the ships had a smile upon his lips,
As he drank and saw in fancy, recking sword and flaming
brand,
And the rapine and the violence and the carnage of the
land.

The invading army numbered twenty thousand men; and effecting their descent at Largs, upon the coast of Ayrshire, they met with such a warm reception from King Alexander the Third and his patriot army, as not only put an end to that particular invasion, but prevented the Norwegian monarchs from ever attempting another. Very few of Haco's ships returned home; and the king himself, flying for his life, reached Kirkwall, in Orkney, where he died of disappointment and vexation.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LXXIV. A FRIEND'S FACE. A MENACE.

It was only about three days after this that Maud, having gone down for her accustomed walk in the croquet-ground, had a rather agitating adventure.

On the ground floor the passages are a little complicated; and Maud, whose thoughts were, as often happened now, far away, missed the turn which would have led her direct to the terrace-door, and entered the passage that terminates in one of the doors of Doctor Antomarchi's oval-room of audience.

The passage is pretty long, and the door into Antomarchi's room is at the further end of it.

That door was now open. Doctor Antomarchi was standing at the table, speaking to a lady who had been listening in a chair

at the opposite side, and was now rising as it seemed to take her leave. The figure and profile of that lady she distinctly saw. Wild with excitement, she recognised the features, and raising her arms with a shrill scream, cried, "Lady Mardykes!" and rushed toward the door.

What fatality seemed always to blast her hopes of liberation!

As she ran forward she saw Lady Mardykes move a step towards a different door, which happened also to be open at the side of the room, in the evident belief that the voice proceeded from that direction; and at the same moment the picture was hidden. Before Maud could reach it the door shut. Against its thick panelling she rushed; she beat it with her hands, she cried wildly again and again: "It is I, Maud Vernon; hear me, take me, save me, Lady Mardykes, for God's sake don't go!"

It was vain; there was no answer, not a sound from within. They had left the room; and Maud ran round the passage to reach the terrace-walk.

But the terrace-door, instead of standing open, as usual at this time of day, had been shut, and without a key she could not open it; she screamed for help; but her piercing appeals rang down the empty corridor, and produced no sign in return.

Half-frantic, she ran round toward the great hall, and had it and the hall-door been unguarded she would have rushed from it in pursuit of her friend, and perhaps have even effected a momentary escape.

But that door was always safely kept. It was protected by a second door, which prevented access to the hall without the aid of the footman's key, who, of course, exercised due caution in using it.

An oval piece of plate-glass enables one to see the hall from inside that door, and availing herself of this, Maud saw Lady Mardykes get into her carriage, take her leave of Antomarchi, and drive rapidly away.

Beating her hands together, with a long cry of agony, Maud witnessed the disappearance of her friend, her last hope, and then she turned, and with her hands over her eyes, cast herself down on the stairs, sobbing as if her heart would burst. She would have liked to die then and there. Why should she live on in that hideous captivity? No other chance would ever come; Mr. Vivian Mardykes was to be removed, that day, to other quarters, and the occasional visits of Lady Mardykes to Glarewoods would totally cease.

The first paroxysm over, Maud dejectedly returned to her room, and without

speaking to Mercy Creswell, threw herself on her bed, and wept with her face buried in the pillows.

In a little time a knock came at the dressing-room door. Mercy Creswell, perplexed, and even a little dismayed, went to answer it, and found Mr. Darkdale waiting in the gallery outside. He there made her one of his brief, quiet communications, and departed.

Uncomfortably ruminating, Mercy Creswell returned, and sat down near the bed.

By this time Maud's tears had ceased to flow, and she was lying without motion. Mercy Creswell thought that she had fallen asleep. But it was not so; for hearing a faint sound, she half opened her eyes, and saw Mercy Creswell making a sign to some one at the door.

Turning her eyes in the same direction, she saw two of the sturdy housemaids standing there.

On seeing her looking that way, probably at another sign from Mercy Creswell, they receded a step or two into the dressing-room.

In the apathy of her dejection, Maud did not care to ask why they were there. She turned again and lay still, still sobbing at intervals, although she was no longer weeping.

In a little while she heard a quick, and not a light step, with a creaking boot, cross the floor, and looking up she saw the dreaded face of Doctor Antomarchi, looking sternly down upon her.

"Your pulse, please," he said, extending his hand.

She placed her wrist in his fingers, and in silence he made his trial of its throb. He then placed his fingers on her forehead for a moment.

"Does she complain of headache?"

"No, sir—do you, miss?" answered and inquired Mercy Creswell in a breath.

"No," said Maud, faintly.

"No, sir, she don't."

"Has she been talking violently?"

"No, sir, not a word," Mercy hastened to assure him; "very quiet."

He beckoned her to follow him to the next room, and there he said in tones, which to her terror Maud distinctly heard:

"Report her demeanour and language to Darkdale, who will call at the door every half-hour, and at the end of two hours I shall let you know whether you are to prepare her for the bath."

She heard Mercy ejaculate, in a horrified aside, "Lord grant it mayn't be so!" The energetic tread crossed the dressing-room,

the door opened and shut, and for the present Antomarchi was gone.

Maud sat up trembling and weeping.

"Now, miss, do you only be quiet, and I think it won't come to nothing," urged Mercy.

Maud continued to weep in silence. After some time she got up, bathed her eyes and temples in cold water, adjusted her dress, and sat down in the dressing-room to await the result.

Did Antomarchi intend to inflict an atrocious revenge, and did he interpose a two hours' suspense, only to enhance its severity?

She would afford him no pretext or excuse. She sat still, and spoke not a word.

At the end of two hours, Antomarchi reappeared. He again felt her pulse, put a question or two to Mercy Creswell, revolved the answers in his mind for a minute or two, and then announced his resolve.

"She can go on just as usual."

"Thank God!" interpolated Mercy Creswell, in a fervent whisper.

"You keep a strict watch upon her words and demeanour, as before, and report to the man on duty when he passes. Mrs. Macklin will send you one of the women on night-duty to assist. These women remain with you for the present."

With these words he left the room.

That evening Mercy Creswell, entering the sitting-room where Maud was, made her short curtsy near the door, and with a mysterious air said:

"A message, please, miss, from Doctor Antomarchi."

Darkdale entered the room with a very slight bow, and an eye that searched every corner in a moment. He said:

"I have been directed by Doctor Antomarchi to tell you, Miss Vernon, that he considers such agitations as you threw yourself into this morning as in the highest degree prejudicial to your health; that you must not seek interviews, while you remain at Glarewoods, with casual visitors to other patients; that another scene, such as that of yesterday, he must regard and treat as an outbreak of morbid contumacy"—here he paused while you might count ten—"indicating a condition which must be reduced by the usual sanatory process, and if necessary by others."

He paused again for a like time.

Her old spirit for a moment flashed from Maud's eyes. She started to her feet, flushed and trembling, on the point of uttering her wild defiance. But it was only

a lighting up of a moment; and pretty Maud, covering her eyes with her hands, sat down and burst into tears.

Mr. Darkdale was not moved by such distresses. He was inured to the eloquence and pathos of the madhouse, and employed the interval, during which he thought her tears would prevent her hearing his message, in directing his shrewd glance upon everything in the room in turn.

There was, apparently, nothing to criticise, however, and when all was a little quieter he continued in the same tone, as if there had been no interruption.

"He wishes you to understand that he will forward, through the post, any letters you may desire to write to your mother, Lady Vernon."

"It's a mockery! it's a mockery! he knows it is. It is she who keeps me in this dreadful place. Oh, sir—Mr. Darkdale, you are a man. Is this manly? You have children, perhaps, whom you love. If they should ever come, and they can't be more helpless than I am, under the power of strangers, think how you would have them dealt with. All I ask for is light. Let some impartial people try whether I am mad or not. Let me have but a trial; no one loses liberty for ever, and the society of human creatures, and the sight of friends, and is buried in such a fearful place for life, without a fair inquiry. Sir, let me see my friends, and have a chance for my freedom, like any other prisoner."

"I have no more power than you in the matter," answered Darkdale, dryly; "anything you have to say on that subject you can mention to Doctor Antomarchi. I am in this house only like Creswell there, or, in a higher sense, yourself, Miss Vernon, to obey orders, or abide the consequences."

Here there was a pause.

"Except to Lady Vernon, and transmitted by Doctor Antomarchi," continued Mr. Darkdale, "there must be no letters, he says, peremptorily; and he must take measures upon any attempt to send, or even to write one. I have neither act nor part, beyond that of simple messenger, you understand, in this."

And so saying, with another slight bow, he left the room quickly.

CHAPTER LXXV. A NEW LEGEND OF THE ROSE, AND THE KEY.

DAYS and nights came and passed in monotonous round. Sometimes Maud had, as unaccountably as a dream of heaven, a half-hour of hope, almost of confidence,

she knew not why. Sometimes came hours of the blackest despair. Sometimes a frenzy of terror.

In external matters, one day was like another, except that on Sunday a pale little resident chaplain with a consumptive cough read the morning service, and preached in the chapel.

It is alleged as a scientific fact, that a man may go into an oven and sit there with a raw mutton-pie suspended by a string in his hand, and come out, himself none the worse, with the same mutton-pie perfectly well baked. We don't know what human nature can bear till it is submitted to experiment. As it grows late in life with us, we look back over the wide waste of years, and meditate on the things that have happened; through some of which we thought we could not have lived, and retained our reason, and yet here we sit, and in our right minds.

And so it was with Maud. Day after day she lived on, and wondered how she lived, how she had not lost her mind. Except when, now and then, as I have said, despair or terror seized her, life moved on in a dream, stupid and awful, but still a dream.

One morning, taking her accustomed walk a little earlier than usual round the croquet-ground, she was astounded to see taking his leave of the philosopher Sidebotham, with whom he had been conversing, a man she knew. He was about the last person of her acquaintance she should have thought it likely to meet in that part of the world.

The figure was youthful and athletic, and the costume clerical. In fact it was the curate of the vicar of Roydon, the Reverend Michael Doody, who stood before her, shaking, with his powerful leave-taking, the hand of the little discoverer of the perpetual motion, who swayed and skipped in that gigantic swing, and showed by a screw of mouth and brow, and a sudden ogle, the force of the Reverend Mr. Doody's grip.

The good-natured curate, who had been away on a ten days' holiday, was here to make personal inspection of the great mechanist, at the request of a friend who took an interest in him.

He was now walking toward Miss Vernon on the side walk that leads straight to the court-yard door, which he was approaching, with swinging strides, laughing to himself, as he looked down on the gravel walk, and repeating the words per-

petuum mobile, in low tones, with an irrepressible chuckle.

Maud stood still; she felt on the very point of fainting. All depended on a word with him, unobserved. If he were to escape her now, years might pass, and no such opportunity occur again. He was scarcely a hundred paces from her; for a moment all darkened, and she lost sight of him. When light returned, she saw him, at an interval of only twelve steps, approaching at the same pace, and still chuckling over his recent conversation.

She put back her veil, and before he could pass he heard a voice, nearly before him, earnestly repeat his name. He raised his eyes, checking his pace, and saw Miss Vernon, of Roydon. It was the face of a person who had suffered. She was pale, and looked at him earnestly, and even imploringly.

"Good—good Heavens! Miss Vernon!" he said in a whisper, staring at her, himself suddenly pale, with a great frown.

"Will you give a message for me?"

"A hundred—send me where you like. Good Heaven! Miss Vernon, I'm very sorry."

"It is only this—they won't allow me to write, or to send a message to a friend, by my maid, and I ask you to do this—and you must not tell any one here that you know me—I want only a chance. Do you know a place called Warhampton?"

"Lord Warhampton's place?"

"Yes," she answered.

"I'll make it out—well?"

"You must see his son, Mr. Charles Marston, and tell him where you found me, and say I sent him this, and don't fail me, in my trouble, and may God for ever bless you."

And she placed in his hand a rose which she had plucked from the tree beside her, and at the same time passed on without turning her head again.

"Be the powers o' Moll Kelly!" exclaimed the curate, recurring, in deep amazement, to an ejaculation which he had not employed till now since his initiation into theology. "The crayture! Bless us all! How close that was kept! Not one at Roydon, except her ladyship, has an idaya."

He looked over his shoulder ruefully after the young lady, and saw her now in the distance.

"I'm not to tell them I know her. I'll not be looking that way after her." As he thus soliloquised he was folding the

rose carefully into a letter, and placing it in his breast-pocket.

"Lady Vernon won't like it. But how can I help that? If the poor young lady is mad, what harm can it do? And if she bairn't, it may do a deal of good. There is no refusing the crature. I don't know where the place is. But I'll go, if it's a hundred miles."

So ruminated and resolved the curate, as, by favour of the key of one of the keepers who constantly hovered about the croquet-ground, he passed out by the door that gives access to the court, and got into his fly in front of the house, and drove to the railway-station, from whence he had come.

As Maud walked in a state of indescribable but controlled agitation towards the lower walk that lies within the yew-hedge, Antomarchi emerged from it. At sight of this man, whose eye seemed everywhere, and to pierce all disguises, she felt as if she would have sunk into the earth. She had drawn her veil closely over her face; he might possibly fail to recognise her. That, indeed, was not very likely. But he generally passed her with a bow. And she hoped he would do so now.

But he did not. He stopped and spoke to her, fixing his eyes upon her.

Every vibration of that dreaded voice seemed to tremble at her heart, and awake a separate terror.

"Have you seen," he asked, with slow emphasis, "an old friend, Miss Vernon, anywhere about here?"

Maud's veil covered her face so as to conceal the signs of her alarm.

"Who is it—what old friend?" she asked.

He paused; perhaps there was something unconsciously careless in the tone of her inquiry that quieted his uneasiness.

"I'm sure it is a mistake. They said the Duchess of Falconbury, as she calls herself, Mrs. Fish, had contrived to get in." And with another bow he went on.

He was nearly satisfied that Miss Vernon had not spoken to the clerical visitor from Roydon, whose untoward arrival, together with her unusually early promenade in the croquet-ground, might easily have resulted in such an occurrence.

Maud hurried back to the house.

Mercy Creswell remarked that she looked ill. No wonder. Such a tumult in heart and brain! Oh! for a friend, however humble, whom she could trust! With Mercy Creswell, in some sort a spy, she must be circumspect. She asked an indifferent

question or two, and, with a bursting heart, sat down and played waltzes on the piano.

CHAPTER LXXVI. AT CARSBROOK.

I NEED not follow the Reverend Michael Doody all the way to Warhampton, nor thence, in pursuit of Charles Marston, to Carsbrook.

It was not until the day after he left Glarewoods that his devious journey brought him to the door of the beautiful old mansion, where that charming widow dispensed her hospitalities. Ample time had passed for a careful consideration of the nature of his message, and of the best manner of communicating it.

In the library he saw the young gentleman alone, told his message, and delivered his significant token.

He had nothing, of his own knowledge, to add to the words of his message. He had been as much amazed to see Maud at Glarewoods, and almost as much horrified, as Marston was himself to hear the news.

His message delivered, the Reverend Mr. Doody, with all the impulsive energy which was peculiar to him, took a hasty leave, and rushed off to catch his train.

Charles Marston, with the precious rose still nodding in his hand, stood thinking for awhile in the library, where this strange interview had just taken place.

He was scared and agitated. Here was the rose plucked by her own hand so lately. He pressed it to his lips. Sent to him, Charles Marston, with a message from her own lips. He laid it fondly to his heart.

Yes, here was the rose. But, alas! for this potfoggling, vulgar generation, where was the key? His ancestor had but to lift his arm, take down his battle-axe, and ride out at the head of his men-at-arms and archers to the siege of the northern castle; but here was no work for manhood, or emotion. The lady must be rescued, alas! by writs and commissioners; and her best champion would be a competent attorney. Every man is a knight-errant in his love; and, like every other Quixote, intolerant of the mean and sober restraints of a well-regulated world. It was hard that this thing was feasible, if at all, without immense pummelling and slaughter, and that he could not even get badly wounded in the process.

He was glad that his sister, Lady Mar-dykes, was out taking a drive with some of her guests. It was clear that the more secret he could be the better. Lady Mar-

dykes had received a note from Lady Vernon on the day of Maud's expected arrival, saying that her daughter was not very well, that she required a little rest, and that, with the advice of a physician, she would leave home for some weeks; perhaps a little longer, but that she hoped she would very soon be quite herself again.

A note to a similar effect had reached Maximilla Medwyn. Maximilla immediately wrote to offer her services as a companion to Maud; but Lady Vernon did not seem to want her, so she could not press it.

Miss Medwyn had left Carsbrook only a day or two before. Her absence was unfortunate. It involved loss of time; for she was the only person acquainted with those "friends of the family," who might be usefully taken into council, and without whom Charles Marston could scarcely hope a successful issue for his enterprise.

He left a little note for his sister, Lady Mardykes, accounting for his flight. A very dear friend of his was in trouble; he must go for a few days and try to be of use. But he won't let her off; she must receive him again when he returns.

Leaving this to account for himself, away he started for Wybourne, to find Maximilla Medwyn at the Hermitage.

He did find her there that evening. She in turn was astounded and terrified. After the first eloquent half-hour, she began to think more coolly.

"Now I understand, for the first time, a singular persecution to which Maud and I were exposed during our little tour in Wales. We were watched and followed everywhere by an ill-looking, canting man; his name was Lizard, and I saw him once shortly after at Roydon. I'm quite certain that man was instructed to follow us, and to collect information and make notes of everything we, that is to say, Maud, said or did which could be perverted into evidence of insanity."

So the old lady indignantly ran on.

"I can swear, and I fancy I have had as good opportunities of judging as Mr. Lizard, that no person was ever of sounder or clearer intellect than Maud Vernon, and there never was anything the least eccentric, in either word or act, except what was natural to the high and wayward spirits of a girl emancipated for a brief holiday from the gloom and formality of a

cold and joyless home. You and I are among the very last who saw her, before this amazing step was taken, and I think neither you nor I can have the slightest difficulty in pronouncing her as sane as ourselves. Mind," she said a little later, "I don't charge Barbara Vernon with acting in this dreadful business contrary to her belief. But she is the kind of person who believes whatever it pleases her passions should be true. She has a kind of conscience, and advises with it. But she bullies it into whatever shape she pleases. I never in my life met a person with the same power of self-delusion. There is no character more dangerous."

At first Miss Medwyn recommended immediate recourse to Mr. Coke, the family attorney. On second thoughts, however, she took a different view. It was quite possible that Mr. Coke's mind was already charged with perverted evidence, and his adhesion secured for Lady Vernon's view of the question. Lady Vernon was artful and able in managing people; and her social influence was potent.

Ultimately, therefore, for a variety of reasons, she decided on old Richard Dawe as the safest person to consult and act with in this crisis. He was sagacious and taciturn. He knew Barbara Vernon thoroughly, and was not a bit afraid of her. He was attached to the family of Vernon; he was a man of inflexible probity, and where he took up a cause, he was a thorough friend and a persevering.

Furnished with his address, and a letter from Maximilla Medwyn, Marston set out without losing a moment unnecessarily. And early next morning had an interview with Mr. Dawe. 308 P.

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CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

CHAPTER VII. GERALD'S LUCK.

THE Dumpington turnpike-keeper, a man naturally of a pleasant and social disposition, and inclined secretly to repine at the dullness of the life to which circumstances had relegated him, was in the habit of killing time, by gazing out of one or other of the square panes of glass let in at either side of the toll-house, and wondering what would be the next object likely to present itself for the relief of his monotony. The dust left by the passing by of a flock of sheep yet lingered in the air, and the turnpike-man had derived at least five minutes' amusement in watching the manner in which the sheep had at first blindly refused to go through the gate, dashing off in every other direction, sticking their heads into the hedge-rows, bleating in a remonstrating manner, which was ineffective, perhaps, from being carried on in one note, notwithstanding the shake with which it concluded, and in seeing them finally, after having been run over by a very circus rider of a dog, being hustled through the gate ignominiously on three legs, the fourth remaining in the hands of the driver or his assistant boy. The turnpike-keeper, with these reminiscences fresh in his mind, and a vacuous smile on his face, suddenly descried a new object of interest.

This was a woman advancing slowly, and with wavering footsteps. Her dress was covered with dust, and her hat was crushed and bent. When the turnpike-man first saw her, her veil was off, and her head thrown back as if to catch the air; but, as she approached, she pulled the veil

over her face, and seemingly nerving herself for what she had to do, tried to steady her footsteps, and advanced with a swifter and surer pace. With more delicacy than could have been expected from him, the Robinson Crusoe of the highway gave up his first idea of addressing her, it being his custom, for the mere sake of hearing the sweet music of speech, to accost every passer-by, and did not even look after her until she was through the gate, and some distance on the road to the town. Then, standing at his door, and scientifically, with his little finger, plumbing the depths of his pipe-bowl preparatory to filling it anew, the worthy man muttered to himself: "She had had a downer, she had; was all covered with dust, and went very shaky on her legs! Queer case that, respectable-looking woman, too respectable for a tramp, but been on the drink like the rest of 'em! That's what ruins 'em all, the drink! If it hadn't been for the drink my wife would have been here now, sitting in that easy-chair, and giving me a bit of her mind, probably. Ah, well! the drink ain't so black as he's painted; but he had laid hold of that poor creature that went by just now, surely!" And the toll-keeper, turning back into the house, proceeded to fill his pipe from the capacious stomach of a brown earthenware image which stood on his chimney-piece, with the full conviction that the woman he had just seen go by was drunk.

That woman was Madge Pierrepont, and after a cursory glance at her, most people would have been of the toll-keeper's opinion. When she had passed beyond the ken of such as might be within the toll-house, she threw back her veil and raised her head well aloft again, once more dropping into the slow and wavering pace.

It was with difficulty, indeed, that she managed to make any progress, for her knees trembled beneath her, and her vision was so dim and flurried as to necessitate her stopping after every few paces, and pressing her hands tightly before her eyes.

In these short intervals of rest the recollection of what she had just gone through would come back upon her; the vision of her husband confronting her, with a sneer upon his lips, would stand out terribly distinct; some of his words, the cruellest and most bitter of them, would surge up in her ears. Then, knowing that another instant's abandonment of herself to such thoughts would cause her again to faint away, with one strong act of will she would dismiss them from her mind, and doggedly plod on her way. Later on she would think of all this, go through it bit by bit, sift out what it meant, and determine what she ought to do; later on, when there was a bed near on which she could fall back and rest, a hand near to steady her or to smooth her forehead, a voice to tell her that she was not all alone in the world, and that though she had been deserted—— No! no! that no one must ever know; but she was weak now, and could not think it out properly. Only let her get home!

So, on through the quaint old streets, quiet and deserted now, for it is one o'clock, and at that hour Wexeter dines. The cathedral dignitaries are taking their luncheon in pleasantly shaded rooms, with low ceilings and black oak fittings, where generations of cathedral dignitaries had done precisely the same thing at precisely the same hour. The ill-used, hard-worked notes of the long-legged, narrow-bodied pianos in the establishments for young ladies at South-Hedge have ceased to sound, for the young ladies are now engaged in attacking roast mutton with an appetite which they will speedily learn to be ashamed of. And afterwards there will be an hour's walk in the garden, with their arms lovingly entwined round each other's waists, and their mouths filled with little backbitings and jealousies, before the overture to *Semiramide* bursts forth upon the scent-laden air, to the delight of the invalid old gentleman who has taken lodgings in that quarter for quiet and repose. Peacefully sleeps Mrs. Twiddle, original manufacturer of the celebrated Bonneton lace, and three doors off equally peacefully sleeps Miss Grylls, her late assistant and present rival, behind the wire-blind in her shop-window,

on which the word "from" is painted so very small, and "Twiddles" so very large. Nothing is to be seen of the proprietor of the photographic and religious fancy assortment shop, where you may pick up a neat ecclesiastical book-marker for thirty shillings, or a reduced copy in stone of the ancient abbey font, handy to keep rings and shirt-studs in, for five pounds. Slumber, too, his young men, who wear white cravats and black coats, and look like curates. Only one verger, standing at the cathedral door, for there is a train due about this time, and it is a likely day for excursionists, sees Madge Pierrepont crossing the yard under the shade of the great elm-trees, where the rooks are holding a noisy concert over her head, and he does not recognise her. Her progress has been slow, but unwatched, and at length she has reached her own door.

Madge longs for rest and quiet, but she is not to enjoy them yet. At the foot of the stairs she is confronted by Miss Cave. The old lady has just returned from a long morning's work at the box-office; having gone through all the accounts of the closing season, having paid away and received to the uttermost farthing, and having been able to submit a very satisfactory balance-sheet to Mr. Dobson, the manager. Naturally, therefore, she is in a good temper, and anxious to relieve herself, after the tedium of business, by a pleasant chat with her lodger, who is such a favourite with her.

"Why, where have you been, my dear?" said Miss Cave, holding up her hands as her eyes fell upon Madge's dust-covered dress; "not been knocked down by one of those dreadful cows, surely;" the idea of being tossed, gored, and trampled upon by errant cattle ranking foremost amongst the old lady's self-inflicted troubles.

"No, Miss Cave," said Madge, with a faint smile, looking down at her dress and endeavouring to brush the dust off with her hand; "no, I have only been for a country walk, and feeling a little tired sat down in the hedge-row, without particularly observing where I placed myself."

"Well, my dear, what you can want with taking long country walks, after all the work you have gone through, I cannot understand. I can't say I think much of the country, for what with the cows, and the dust, and the crowds of midges that buzz all about you, it seems to me to be more pain than pleasure taking it altogether. Now when I go out of Wexeter, give me

the seaside, I say; and talking of that, my dear, I have brought some news which I think will please you."

"Indeed, Miss Cave, and what might that be?"

"Well, Mr. Dobson is finely delighted at the success of his season, as well he may be, as being the best he has had the last three years; and when he said so to me just now, I up and told him at once that it was all owing to you, my dear, and that he had had no leading lady here for years that was a patch upon you, and that you were as great a favourite out of the theatre as in it."

"That was very kind of you, dear Miss Cave."

"It was only the truth, Madge—there, I never called you Madge before, not being given to use Christian names freely as I find is the custom in music-halls and low places of that kind, but as I am fond of you I will do so now and in future; it was only the truth, Madge, and Mr. Dobson agreed to it, and then he asked me how I thought it would do if he was to take the Avonmouth Theatre for the short summer season, that would take in the regatta and the races and the grand military review. 'Miss Pierrepont would be new at Avonmouth,' he said, 'and I think she would draw.' I told him I thought so too, but that he must give you better terms than you had here, for there would be the expenses of moving for yourself and your sister, and you would have perhaps to dress a little more than you do here, it being a gay place. Dobson didn't see it at first, but I held to it, so finally he told me to talk to you about it, and offer you an extra pound a week."

Miss Cave had expected that her announcement would be received with great pleasure. She was disappointed when Madge, with a grave face, said, "I am much obliged to you, dear Miss Cave, and to Mr. Dobson, but I don't think the offer would suit."

"Not suit you! You are too shy and timid, Madge. You dislike going among strange people, and perhaps you are afraid of the officers and flighty fellows that you have heard of in Avonmouth. Don't you be afraid of them, my dear. Dobson wouldn't dream of going without taking me with him, and I shall be sure to look after you."

"No, indeed, it isn't that."

"Indeed, what can it be, then? Oh, I know, that young Hardinge."

"Mr. Hardinge, what about him?"

"Well, Dobson wanted him to go, too. The Avonmouth Theatre has not been open for two years now, and the scenery all wants looking after and touching up, and Dobson wanted young Hardinge to go off in advance and get it ready by the time you came there; but when he was spoken to this morning, he said he was very sorry he could not, that his engagement was up, and that he did not think there was any chance of his coming back to the circuit."

"And what has that to do with me, dear Miss Cave?"

"Well, my dear, I have got eyes in my head, though they are not so bright as they were, and I can see that while that young man is desperately in love with you, you have a sneaking kindness for him, and I thought you might have set your horses together, and—"

"Mr. Hardinge hasn't spoken to me on the subject, dear Miss Cave, and I assure you I have not the smallest knowledge of his movements."

"Well, my dear, no offence. I won't take your answer to Dobson just now, lest you might change your mind. Think it over and let me know to-morrow, and if I were you I would lie down a bit after dinner and rest myself. You ought to be very brilliant to-night, for it is not only the last night, but Dunsany's benefit, and he's sure to have a fine house, for he's a Buffalo, or a Druid, or something of that kind, and we shall be full of brothers, with aprons on and green ribbons, and tinthing-a-me-jigs round their necks."

Then Madge, nodding kindly at the old lady, went up-stairs, and after looking into the sitting-room to tell Rose to get her dinner by herself, as she felt too tired and unwell to eat, went to her own room; and locking the door threw herself at full length upon her bed. There are some people upon whom any great grief has a stunning, overwhelming effect, so overwhelming that it numbs their brain and paralyses their power of thought. Madge Pierrepont was of these. With all the wish, she felt utterly powerless to deliberate what effect her recent interview with her husband ought to have on her future life, or even to recollect the details of that interview. It was all too sudden, too recent; the weight of the blow seemed to have deprived her of the power of thinking over what would be its result, or even when it had been given. She strove to rally, to collect her senses, to think it over,

but all in vain. She lay in a dull lethargic state, from which the recollection of what Miss Cave had said about Gerald Hardinge roused her only for an instant. Then she relapsed, and gradually losing consciousness, fell into a deep unbroken sleep.

In that state she remained, until she was roused by a loud knocking at the door, and Rose's voice outside, telling her it was time for her to go to the theatre. At first she listened mechanically, without the power to move or even to speak, then muttering something sufficient to satisfy her sister that she had been heard, Madge struggled into a sitting position, and clasping her head with both her hands, strove to collect her scattered senses, and to comprehend what had been passing around her. It flashed upon her in an instant, the interview with Philip in the lane, the long dreary walk back, with heavy heart and wavering footsteps, the talk with Miss Cave, and her mention of the Avonmouth Theatre. She recollected them all, but what would be the result of it all was as far off as ever; she had come to no decision, and she could come to none now. What she had to do now was to hurry off to the theatre and to act. To act! With the feeling of an iron band around her temples, and her heart throbbing like a ball of fire.

Mr. Dunsany's friends, who, as Miss Cave expected, mustered in large numbers, were very much pleased with their evening's entertainment, more especially when the hero of the night came on in the after-piece, wearing, in addition to his theatrical costume, the insignia of the Order of Friendly Brothers, to which he belonged, and interpolated in his dialogue many mystic allusions, only understood by the initiated. The audience generally was of a convivial rather than of a critical character, and more appreciative of the comic than of the tragic acting. It was agreed on all sides, however, that Miss Pierrepont was "a fine woman," and if she failed in impressing them as they had been led to believe, they laid it more to their own want of comprehension, than to any shortcoming on her part.

As for Madge herself, she acknowledged afterwards she owed it entirely to the early training of her memory, and to her methodical practice of her profession, that she got through her part at all. She dressed herself in a dream, and in a dream she went through her various scenes, speaking when the cue was given to her, and not missing a word of what she had

to say, "doing her spouting," as Philip Vane would have called it, with due emphasis and intonation, but with eyes that were without fire, and gesticulations void of life or energy. How she got through it she knew not, but at last her performance came to an end, and she was led on before the curtain by the delighted Dunsany. Still dazed, she went to her dressing-room, and exchanged her theatrical attire for her ordinary walking-dress. Still dazed, she was coming forth from the stage-door, when she was confronted by Gerald Hardinge, who took her hand.

Then she roused at once.

"Good evening, Miss Pierrepont," said Gerald, very polite, and rather distant, for Gonnop, the hall-keeper, was standing close by, and his ears were full-cocked; "may I have the pleasure of seeing you home?"

Madge thanked him for his proposed escort, and they went out together.

When they were in the street, and out of hearing, Gerald turned to her and said:

"Didn't Rose give you my message?"

"Certainly."

"And you were going away without waiting for me?"

"Not at all. I fully expected to see you where I did."

"Did you? And yet you looked astonished as though my presence had taken you quite unawares. You have had that same strange look, however, during the whole evening. I was watching you from the wings while you were acting, and I saw it then. I see it now."

"Do you?" said Madge, trying to smile, but there was a leaden weight on her eyelids, and the muscles of her mouth refused to move.

"Yes," said Gerald Hardinge, gazing into her face; "your appearance gives me the notion of some one who has been bewitched, or is under a spell."

"Break the spell, then, and exorcise the demon," cried Madge, still striving against herself, "but don't let us stand here in the middle of the street, glaring into each other's faces, or we shall excite the wonderment of the passers-by."

"No," said Gerald; "let me take you home, I have lots to say to you."

"We won't go to my lodgings I think, Gerald," said Madge, mindful of what Miss Cave had said to her in the morning; "let's walk round the crescent, there is not a soul near, and you shall tell me all you have to say."

"As you please," he said, shortly.

"Don't be angry, Gerald; I am sure I am right in what I am doing," whispered Madge, laying her hand on his arm. And instantly he was tamed and happy.

As they turned into the crescent, the chimes of the cathedral clock rang out the four quarters, and the deep bell struck eleven. Listening to it, and looking up at the great yellow moon riding high in the sky, Madge recollected where she had been the same hour on the previous evening, and an irrepressible shudder ran through her frame. Gerald felt the vibration of the hand lying on his arm, and looked down gravely and earnestly at her.

"What is it, Madge?" he asked. "You tremble then from head to foot; there is something the matter with you. What is it? I insist upon knowing!"

"There is nothing wrong with me, Gerald, indeed," said Madge, "believe me there is not. I have been working hard, you know, and I was perhaps a little overcome by the fatigue and the heat. But the season is over now, and I shall have rest—at least until I go to Avonmouth."

"Oh, Dobson has made that proposition already, has he?" said Gerald. "I knew he was going to do so, but I scarcely thought it would be so quick; however, you are not going to Avonmouth, Madge."

"You are not, Gerald, I know."

"Nor are you!"

"Are my future movements, then, to be influenced by yours, sir?"

"I hope and trust so, Madge," said the young man, earnestly; "I devoutly hope and trust so."

There was something in his tone which had more effect in rousing her and fixing her attention than anything she had experienced within the last twenty-four hours. Up to this point she had been striving against an overpowering lassitude and want of energy, which still retained their hold upon her; had been trying to laugh and make light conversation, as it were, for the mere sake of keeping herself up to the required pitch of answering her companion's remarks. But his last few earnest words had worked a charm. Her attention was aroused, and her interest excited.

"If that is to be the case," said she, "you must no longer talk in riddles, but speak out plainly, Gerald."

"I want nothing better," said the young man. "I told Rose, last night, to let you know I wanted to speak to you on a most important matter."

"Yes, I recollect on making the appoint-

ment Rose told me that it was important; and it is important, is it Gerald?"

"To me the most important matter in my life," said Gerald, not looking at her, and speaking very low.

"Tell me, then," said Madge, in the same tone.

Under the fascination of that moment, with his low voice murmuring in her ear, her hand resting on his arm, in the full consciousness that he was devoted to her body and soul, the great mental agony she had just been labouring under melted away entirely for the time.

"Tell me, then," she whispered again.

"Why should I tell you the first part of it again?" he murmured, "unless, indeed, you have the same gratification in hearing that I have in saying it. You know how I love and worship you, my darling! How, since the first hour I saw you, I have been your slave, never happy but when near you, and having no other thought but of and for you. You hear me, Madge?"

She made him no answer, save what he might infer from the smallest pressure of her hand upon his arm.

"I have said all this to you before, and you have listened to me and laughed at me, and while you half forbade my thus addressing you, let me go on, because you said it was idle talk. I told you then that the time would come when such talk would be idle no longer, when I might have the power of attaining such a position as would enable me to ask you to marry me. You recollect all this, Madge?"

He bent his head and looked down at her. Her face was very white, and it was more by the motion of her lips than from anything he heard, that he understood her to assent.

"Do you recollect further what you said?"

"I do."

"I recollect the very words; 'you shall ask me when the time arrives, Gerald,' you said, 'and I will answer you then.' Madge, the time has arrived now, and I claim your answer."

"Gerald!" said Madge, with a low cry.

"It has arrived now, my darling," he continued, passing his arm around her. "I am to remain a scene-painter and a theatre drudge no longer. Listen, dear one! For months past I have been working in secret, and have completed two pictures, which I sent to London. Yesterday morning I heard from the agent I had consigned them to, that they have been bought at

the prices which I had fixed upon them; bought, the agent tells me, by some rich, eccentric old man, who wishes me to come to London, and pledges himself to find sufficient commissions for me to occupy my time for months to come. More than this, the agent advises me at once to come to town, and introduce myself to my patron, as, should he take a fancy to me, there is no knowing where the good results may end. When I got that letter, Madge, my first thought was of you; now, I said, I can ask her to be my wife; now I can ask her to link her lot with mine, not as the obscure drudge of a country theatre, but as one who has a fair prospect of fame and fortune; now I can offer her rest from the toil she has undergone, and freedom from the annoyances and insolence which she is compelled to put up with. Madge, darling, I can, I do, offer you this now. What do you say in reply?"

Nothing.

She said nothing. He drew her closely to him, and bending down noticed that her eyelids were closed, and when he pressed his lips upon her cheek, it was stone cold.

Gerald feared she had fainted, but immediately afterwards she half unclosed her eyes, and murmured, in broken tones, "I am very ill, Gerald! Take me home—take me home!"

A VISITORS' BOOK.

PERHAPS the Falls of Niagara, the most magnificent cataract, or series of cataracts, in the world, are annually visited by greater multitudes, than any other single object of natural beauty and grandeur that attracts the curiosity of the human race. Greater crowds may distribute themselves annually on the mountains and lakes of Switzerland, or among the wild and lovely scenes of the north and west Highlands of Scotland; but these crowds do not all converge to one point as at Niagara. The Falls are so beautiful, that not even the bustle and swarm of fifty thousand people, noisy, pompous, silly, vulgar, and ignorant as the immense majority of them may be, can detract very materially from the delight of a visit. I knew a worthy gentleman, however, an Englishman of world-wide fame, who happened to be within two hours' ride of Niagara by rail, in the height of the summer season, and who refused to visit the Falls—which he ardently desired to see—because he had a horror of the

crowds of tourists. He unluckily deferred his visit until a quieter time, missed his opportunity, and returned to England, leaving Niagara, as Wordsworth did Yarrow, "unseen and unknown," a vision of the fancy and not of the memory. I have been more fortunate. I have visited Niagara half a dozen times—in the full season, in the half season, and in the long Canadian winter, when all the tourists had departed, when all the hotels were closed, and when the last of the professional guides (a class of bores the most wearisome and dispiriting in the world) had disappeared; and when I had the whole of the magnificent scenery to myself, and no profane or inane babbler at my side, to pester me with platitudes, to tell me what I knew and spoil it in the telling, and when all was done to look to me for backsheesh. I am not going to describe Niagara here. I have done it in another place, and am so thoroughly impressed with the unsatisfactoriness of the description, as well as that of every other which I have seen, as to have firmly resolved never to attempt it again. My present purpose is not so much with Niagara itself as with its visitors, and more especially with such visitors as take the trouble to write in the Album or Visitors' Book at the Table Rock. King David, the Psalmist, said in his haste that all men were liars, and a Scottish clergyman preaching on the text, declared that if David had lived in his parish he might have said it at his leisure. If this worthy minister had been at Niagara Falls, and passed a few hours looking over the Visitors' Book, he might, without great injustice, have varied the phraseology, and said, either at haste or at leisure, that all men were "cads."

Barbarous tribes amuse themselves by making marks or drawings on their naked bodies, and take a pride in thus tattooing themselves, that all their small world may see and admire. Members of civilised communities, instead of writing upon their bodies, strive to attract the attention of a larger circle by scribbling upon walls, cutting their names and initials on trees, and when travelling at home or abroad, in writing their names and reflections in hotel books.

It has been said that the horse is a very respectable animal, but that he has the unhappy fatality of making more or less of a blackguard of everybody who has much to do with him. In like manner it may be said of Niagara, one of the grandest objects in Nature, that it has the unhappy fatality of making fools of nine-

tents of the people who go into spoken or written raptures about it. Such a mass of inanities, platitudes, conceits, affectations, impertinences, sillinesses, mouldy jokes, and absurd profundities, with here and there a gleam of good sense and good-feeling, is possibly not to be found in equal quantity in any library beneath the moon, as that which exists in the possession of the worthy Canadian who has established the Museum at the Falls, and has for more than a quarter of a century provided visitors with books, and pen and ink, to record their names and their observations. The following is a selection of some of the best and some of the worst of these entries.

Place aux dames! Niagara is a favourite resort of lovers before, during, and after the honeymoon, as well as of lovers whose courtship may be interrupted by unkind Fate, and predestined never to attain the blissful consummation of marriage. "And all mankind," as the eloquent and philosophic Emerson observes, "loves a lover. Though," he goes on to say, "the celestial rapture falling out of heaven seizes only upon those of tender age, and although we can seldom see after thirty years a beauty overpowering all analysis or comparison, yet the remembrance of these visions outlasts all other remembrance. No man ever forgot the visitation of that power to his heart which created all things new, which was the dawn in him of music, poetry, and art, which made the face of Nature radiant with purple light, and made the morning and the night a varied enchantment." So, for these reasons, and with, I hope, a proper amount of respect and gallantry for the beautiful sex, I turn to the autographs and the observations of lovers, whether they be gentlemen or ladies. Not that my readers will be very amply rewarded. No doubt the true lovers, the real ladies and gentlemen, have something better to do and to think of than to scrawl their names and their thoughts in public places, for the relief of their own hearts, or for the after amusement of strangers. Wise people, whether lovers or not, keep their private emotions sacred, but fools of both sexes love to babble and to scribble. The first lover thus records his experience:

On Table Rock we did embrace,
And then we stood both face to face;
The moon was up, the wind was high,
I looked at she, and she at I.

Language failed him after this effort, and he could say no more. The next gentleman must have had a difference with his

lady-love. At all events he eases his mind by the profound reflection:

Great is the mystery of Niagara's waters,
But more mysterious still are some men's daughters.

Another swain, deeply enamoured, but more of a wag than a poet, writes from his heart, and with a daring rhyme:

Next to the bliss of seeing Sarah,
Is that of seeing Niagara.

A disconsolate one, jilted, perhaps, or it may be divorced, records her sorrows in prose. "I have come," she says, "to Niagara too late. Five years ago I was a creature of enthusiasm, poetry, and devotion. Now I am feelingless, heartless, soulless. The once gushing fountains of youthful emotion have been broken up by the withering blast of adversity. The flowers of my life are blighted, and all is dull—all is tame. I laugh at Niagara! What care I for the thunder of its waters? Great God, how should I have enjoyed this sight once!" The signature to this outburst of disappointment is "Bit," to which some critic of the sterner sex has appended this comment, "Yes, bit with affectation!"

A happy lover enters what he perhaps thought a very original remark: "How lonely and desolate the life of man would be without woman!" To this a critic, who signs himself "Quip," appends the query, "What has woman to do with the Falls?" A third tourist, signing himself "Crank," replies, "If woman has not to do with the Falls, I should like to know who has. She made the first Fall herself." The next is evidently the production of a much later period in married life than the moon of honey:

Once on a time with naught to do at home,
My wife and I determined we would roam;
But to decide upon the route
Admitted much domestic doubt.
If I said east, she said 'twas best
That we should travel to the west;
So after many arguments and brawls,
She brought me nolens volens to the Falls.

The thunderous roar of the waters is so loud, when heard either from the Table Rock, or from the Tower on Goat Island, that silence, if not imposed by the majesty of the scene, is rendered necessary, by the difficulty of making oneself heard above the din of waters. This fact, of course, does not escape the notice of the amiable cynics who like to make a harmless jest upon the ladies. One of them writes:

Niagara, it has been sung,
Can speak so loud without a tongue,
You hear its voice a mile hence.
But I a greater wonder know:
A pretty woman, who, although
She has a tongue, keeps silence.

Socrates, who hints that he has no Xanthippe of his own, declares what he would do if he were in such an unhappy condition :

If I were annoyed with a termagant wife,
Whose tongue was the bane of my every-day life,
To try to get rid of her pestilent clatter,
I'd live on the brink of this great fall of water.

The last quotation, out of scores that might be made, is the more creditable effusion of a happy lover :

In after years when memory comes
To cheer us in our happy homes,
A voice amid the social cheer
Shall speak of what we witnessed here.
No time, no change, no chance shall sever
The links that bind our hearts for ever.

Among the contributors to this farrago, the utter idiots and cads who write what no one cares to read, and which it is a wonder that any ordinary, decent person cares to write, are the most numerous. There is, however, a touch of humour about the New York stock-broker who wrote the following :

I came from Wall-street
To see this water sheet;
Having seen this water sheet,
I return to Wall-street.

Next in order to the wittings are the sentimental and the pious, or affectedly pious people, who indulge in heroics—mock, not real, and in ambitious moral reflections on the beauty and sublimity of the spectacle. Their name is, indeed, legion; and their attempts both at prose and verse are more than sufficient to show how small a way the ordinary education that people receive goes towards enabling them to write sensibly of anything but that which concerns their own business, or the every-day current of their lives. One man, who dates from Dublin, says: "Forgive these lines; they emanate from the pen of one who derives his inspiration from the sublime works which surround him. Poetry is not my forte. I was never found to be a brilliant writer, but silence is not the only admiration which these great works deserve." Impressed with the idea of saying something, though he confesses he is not able to say it, he tells all future travellers who may read what he has written, that "he has sipped to the very dregs the cup of affliction" (taking his affliction daintily, sipping it, not drinking it), "but that in spite of all he cannot gaze upon Niagara without feeling how little, how very, very little and insignificant are his sorrows when compared with the ills of the many!" A short course of Whately's or Mill's logic would have done this inconsequential

reasoner more good than a month at the Falls. Another, who would be eloquent if he knew how, writes his Farewell to Niagara: "Thou lord of water-power in thy majestic glory. Thou art all and more than all my soul conceived thee! I never dreamed thy wonders to be so numberless and vast. Beauty in union with grandeur here fill and elevate and satisfy my soul!" The more prosaic scribbler who follows in verse, writes better, and very much to the point:

While standing under the Horse-shoe Fall,
Didn't it look great, didn't I look small!

One who aspired to the sublime, and floundered into the absurd, writes: "When God went forth to the work of creation attended by a shining array of seraphim and cherubim, these living ones veiled their faces and said, 'Lord of Glory, stay Thy hand or we die.' 'Once more,' said the Almighty, 'and inanimate creation is complete.' He spake, and the mountains started back, and ocean heaved affrighted as Niagara sprang into birth." Why ocean should have been alarmed at a fall of fresh water, so many hundreds of miles from the shore, and the whole immense volume of whose waters, poured into her capacious breast, is of no more account than a drop in a bucket, the writer would find it difficult to explain. Another enraptured traveller, not quite so ridiculous, is struck with as much admiration by the beauty of the rainbow, that in the clear sunshine always smiles upon the torrent, as by the grandeur of the Fall, and relieves his soul by writing: "The most stupendous work of Nature! The mountains, oceans, lakes, and cataracts are great specimens of the magnificence of God's works, but here his *beneficence* is indicated by the perpetual rainbow. What mind is not enlarged, what soul is not filled with ennobling emotions by the contemplation of such wonders? Let man behold with awe, and learn HUMILITY." As if the beneficence of God were never clear to this shallow brain until he saw the rainbow, and as if the mountains and the ocean were not as much proof of beneficence as the iris in the spray! One visitor, pestered no doubt by this mock piety and crooked logic, and who modestly signs himself "Snooks," very properly rebukes the flagrant devotion of people who, if they are to be taken at their words, never had an elevated thought of the Deity until they saw Niagara. He says: "The most insignificant plant, the minutest insect, the smallest drop of water, when examined through the

medium of the microscope, proves beyond a doubt to every reasoning mind the existence of an almighty creating and sustaining power. Must, then, the circumstance of a large body of water rushing down an inclined plane, and over a precipice of one hundred and fifty feet in height, urged merely by the power of gravitation, be selected as the most striking demonstration of the greatness of the Almighty?" The practical and philosophic Snooks is right in his inquiry.

One characteristic of the visitors to Niagara must not be omitted. The British or Canadian, commonly called the Horse-shoe Fall, is far more magnificent than the fall on the American side of the river, although the latter is so grand and beautiful in itself, that it only suffers by comparison with one grander and more beautiful still.

"Should the United States and England ever be involved in war," said a well-known American of literary fame, "England will of course be whipped" (American English for beaten). "But we shall not be hard upon the old country. We will annex the Canadian side of the Niagara river and the Great Horse-shoe Fall; and then we will make a treaty of peace to last until England chooses to break it." The Americans make no secret of their desire to possess the whole of Niagara. One of them writes: "The Yankees generally take, and keep, too, whatever they set their hearts upon having." To this "John Bull" replies: "Boast not your greatness, Yankees tall, your arrogance may catch a fall." "John Bull, junior," appends, "May be so, but not the Horse-shoe Fall." Another American, after an ardent apostrophe to the "land of the stripes and stars," narrates how

I stood on Table Rock,
Felt the earth's tremor at the wondrous shock,
But here, I own, I felt a thrill of shame,
No patriot's triumph warmed my drizzled frame;
My pride was humbled, and my boast was small,
For England's queen possessed the noblest Fall!

The travelling English are proud of this imperial possession, and the Canadians, whether of British or French extraction, share these feelings to the fullest extent, and are in no humour to brook this covetousness of their American neighbours without remark. "Blue Nose," from New Brunswick, has appended to one of these boasts:

Uncle Sam! Uncle Sam, you're a bully and a swagger!
But you shall not—no! you shall not steal a wave of
our Niagara!

"Should," writes a Yankee, "the British lion ever come to the Falls of Niagara, he will see the proud eagle of American liberty soaring in his majesty, and will go roaring down the mighty cataract in despair." "A Lion's Whelp" appends: "If the American eagle comes to the British side of the Falls, that same old lion will pluck his feathers, and compel him to take refuge on a dunghill."

But the British and Canadian entries in the album are, as a rule, pacific, and manifest no disposition to quarrel with the Americans. On the contrary, they express and desire peace—peace for its own sake, and peace for the scandal and shame it would be on two kindred peoples, speaking the same language, springing from the same parentage, inheriting the same history, traditions, and literature, to go to war, on any pretence whatever, that diplomacy could smooth over or common sense and Christianity avoid. Under the date of May, 1849, occurs the following entry:

"May the mighty waters of the Niagara smother, in their eternal vortex, all the animosities and rancours that may ever have existed between Great Britain and her fair daughter of the West, and remain, to succeeding generations, an everlasting and indestructible monument of the harmony which, I trust, will never cease to exist between the two nations (of one blood), at once the most enterprising and the most enlightened in the world."

Every good Englishman and every good American will say Amen to this sweet prayer. Perhaps the last extract, bearing the signature of "Morpeth," and written by the late accomplished and amiable Earl of Carlisle, is the best in feeling, as well as in versification, that the sublime scenery of the Falls has prompted any one to write in the album:

There's nothing great or bright, thou glorious Fall,
Thou mayest not to the fancy's sense recal;
The thunder-riven cloud, the lightning's leap,
The stirring of the chambers of the deep;
Earth's emerald green, and many-tinted dyes,
The fleecy whiteness of the upper skies;
The tread of armies thickening as they come,
The boom of cannon and the beat of drum;
The brow of beauty and the form of grace,
The passion and the prowess of our race;
The song of Homer in its loftiest hour,
The unresisted sweep of human power;
Britannia's trident on the azure sea,
America's young shout of liberty!
Oh! may the waves that madden in thy deep,
There spend their rage nor climb th' encircling steep,
And till the conflict of thy surges cease,
The nations on thy banks repose in peace!"

His lordship was not content to leave

his graceful little poem to the obscurity of the Visitors' Book, but gave it publicity on his return from America. And cordially re-echoing the philanthropic and statesman-like wish expressed in the concluding couplet, I shut up the Visitors' Book, and bid farewell to Niagara.

THE LOSS OF MY SPECTACLES.

I HAVE worn spectacles for nearly twenty years, and they have become to me a necessary of life, secondary only to food and clothing. I can indeed take my walks abroad with unarmed eyes, being fortunately able, without artificial assistance, to discern objects of comparatively large magnitude. But, if I would read even for a short time, my glasses become absolutely indispensable. A few lines, printed in exceptionally bold type, I can perhaps wade through, with the untrustworthy aid of guessing, by holding the paper at a distance from my face, my defect being the reverse of that endured by the short-sighted. But in a few minutes the annoyance of a process, which may be compared to the observation of stars through a fog, not quite dim enough to render them utterly invisible, amounts to physical torture. Hence, as reading constitutes the chief occupation of my life, I rarely lay my spectacles aside, but wear them even when they are not altogether needful. The consciousness of depriving myself of a power which I am accustomed almost perpetually to use, is repugnant to my habits. Satirical friends, who see me not engaged in study, affirm that I look over not through my spectacles, and thus infer that I wear them through some species of affectation. Blest themselves with strong natural vision, they cannot realise the fact that the consciousness of a diminution of sense is intolerable. Yet they might reflect that nobody likes to have his fingers numbed, even though there is no tangible object at hand which he wishes immediately to grasp.

I am of what is called a careless temperament. The incessant loss of umbrellas in the course of my earlier years, culminating in the involuntary exchange of a new silk for an old gingham, has induced me to abandon the possession of the commonest shield against inclement weather. I have not owned an umbrella for years, nor do I venture to borrow one, being certain that if I did so, I should infallibly find myself guilty of a breach of trust; and I have

acquired an art of encountering rain, which to some would appear unattainable. Thriftless enough to expend in cabs money sufficient to convert an entire hall into an arsenal for umbrellas, I am content, when a sudden shower has rendered the supply of those useful vehicles inadequate to the demand, to join the very mixed assemblies which stand under archways and porticoes till the violence of the visitation has abated. There is sure to be in such assemblies a topic of discourse, in which all can take an active part. Englishmen are proverbial all over the world for opening conversation with remarks on the state of the weather, even when the subject is of no vital importance. It is, therefore, a matter of course, when a little crowd is gathered together under an archway, through the strong influence of one and the same desire in every individual composing it, the desire, namely, of not being wetted to the skin, that the importance of this particular subject should be to the highest degree intensified. "Do you think this shower will last long?" is assuredly a question, under the circumstances, of absolute interest, and the reply that the shower is too violent for long continuance, if it does not denote profound research, or imply the possession of prophetic gifts, is hailed with pleasure as a welcome truth. The appearance of a patch of blue, which gradually enlarges itself amid an expanse of dark clouds, is a thing of joy to every anxious heart, and he who, like myself, is habitually destitute of an umbrella, may occasionally derive an amount of unamiable gratification when the owner of a costly silk protector humbly takes his place beneath the arch or portico, averring that its protecting powers are unequal to the fierceness of the attack.

Necessity, in the shape of an April torrent, of the true cat-and-dog kind, makes strange arch-fellows, but of all the chance companions the most unbearable are those persistent optimists, who are sure to crop up, like other ill-weeds, under the influence of a pelting shower. The optimist of the arch, by whom probably the rain is secretly detested more than by any other sufferer, obtrusively calls the attention of all hearers to the immense benefit that will arise from the affliction of the moment, and expresses his mock delight in the most offensive form.

"Ah, sir," said one of these to me, on one occasion, when there was an uneasy suspicion that the arch was leaky, "ah,

sir, this rain will do more good than ever you or I shall."

I felt nettled not a little. When we are reflecting on our own personal inconveniences, we have no wish to disperse our sympathies over the whole of mankind, and a hat varnished brightly by Jupiter Pluvius does not suggest grateful meditations or glad prospects of the crops. I felt inclined to tell the optimist that he had better apply his remarks to himself exclusively, and that if he felt convinced from arguments drawn from his own experience that he would never do as much good as a pelting shower, I was not, for my own part, inclined to become the subject of so humiliating a comparison. Very glad was I when the abatement of the rain released me from his companionship, and I can well recollect that when, after leaving my place of refuge, I looked back, I saw that the grateful man, who had been so ecstatic in his admiration, remained longer under the arch than any of the rest.

Careless with respect to umbrellas and other articles, I am extremely careful of my spectacles. It is with a sort of nervous instinct that, whenever I am going out, I clap my hand hastily to my waistcoat-pockets to ascertain that they are safe. And here let me lament, with well-placed grief, that the most convenient form of spectacle-case has suddenly become obsolete. I refer to the thin, flat sheath, open at both ends, which glided into the waistcoat-pocket without occupying any sensible room, and some years ago drove out of fashion the thick unwieldy case, which requires the side-pocket of a coat for its abode, and opening at one end, is closed with a tongue like a pocket-book. Oddly enough the useful innovation has of late disappeared, and the ancient mass of leather is restored to supremacy, without a single claim to public favour. Rarely can one of the closing cases be found long enough to contain your spectacles, without unduly bending the delicate arms of metal that press lightly on the temples; whereas in the neat, flat sheath any spectacles can be inserted. Nevertheless, this sheath is not to be obtained save by a remarkable stroke of good fortune. To me its disappearance is a source of constant trouble. Disgusted with the clumsy article, I have given up the use of cases altogether, and carry my spectacles unsheathed in my waistcoat-pocket. Under these circumstances, the normal transparency of the glasses is occa-

sionally interrupted, and they are brought into a semi-opaque condition, which necessitates the employment of a pocket-handkerchief. Now, the restoration of glasses to their proper transparency is by no means a pleasant operation. The foggy speck that has dimmed the centre will often, after being skilfully rubbed away, reappear near the circumference, where it is less easily removed. Breathing on the glass, too, though sometimes successful, is a hazardous experiment, inasmuch as you may sometimes produce a mist which you will find yourself unable to dispel.

But whatever inconvenience may attend the use of spectacles, they are so great a blessing to those who require them, that, like health, their true value cannot be ascertained until they are lost. This truth was impressed upon me by bitter experience one Saturday night. At about half-past eleven, when I was on my way home, a sudden instinct told me that my spectacles were gone. My hand, thrust successively into all my waistcoat-pockets, confirmed the truth of the mysterious revelation, which was still further confirmed by a plunge into the breast-pocket of my coat. The sense of my bereavement then began to force itself upon me in all its horror. The lost spectacles were the only pair I possessed in the world, and as all the shops would be very properly closed on the morrow, I should be in a state of semi-blindness till Monday. Moreover, I knew that, from circumstances which need not be narrated, I should be unable to leave home till the Sunday evening, and there was the possibility before me of dying for want of occupation. In a frenzy of desperation I thrust my hands into places where the missing treasure would certainly not be found. I rifled the pockets of my coat-tail; I opened a letter-case, likewise a book I commonly carried about me, and of course, as I expected, my search was without profit.

I hurried home, went with all possible speed to bed, and speedily buried the consciousness of my loss in sleep, though I believe I dreamed of the horrible fate of *Œdipus*. Sleep is an admirable balm for misery, but it brings with it this disadvantage, that the repose which it affords is almost certainly followed by a strong reaction. When we wake in the morning, the misfortune of the previous day does not present itself at once in perfect distinctness, but we have at first a vague notion that there is something wrong, and then

the abstract wrong gradually reveals itself in horrible perspicuity. With Sunday morning came first the consciousness that my property had been in some way diminished. But how? Had I been robbed of my watch, or had I unwittingly given a sovereign instead of a shilling to a cabman? No. According to a more worldly calculation, my loss had been much less heavy than it would have been in the event of either of these calamities. I had merely lost my spectacles, mere glass set in steel, but the immediate prospect of blank hours was hideous. I never before felt the intense pathos of the concluding lines of Wordsworth's beautiful poem:

Few knew, for very few could know,
When Lucy ceased to be;
But now she's in her grave, and ah!
The difference to me!

There is an etymological connexion between "Lucy" and "lux," or light, and a practical connexion between light and spectacles.

What would I have given on that dreadful morning for a slight—not a racking—headache, that would have rendered all mental occupation disagreeable? The loss of my spectacles would then have harmonised with my mental and bodily condition. But, ah! far from having a headache or desiring repose, I had a morbid longing to read something. My only defect in health was an absence of appetite, of all defects the most painful under the circumstances. Had I been sharp set, as the vulgar have it, I could have become for the nonce a gourmand, and passed more than my usual time in the consumption of my breakfast. But even this refuge for a "far niente," that was anything but "dolce," was denied me. I could scarcely eat at all.

After awhile I bethought myself of the possession of a powerful magnifying-glass, which I use to distinguish small words in maps, and in pocket dictionaries. And a very serviceable instrument it is when employed on rare occasions. But, as I soon found when I sought its aid to relieve me from my distress, it became, when employed for the purpose of continuous reading, an instrument of torture worthy the invention of an Oriental tyrant. The page before you is broken up into a number of circular lakes, which appear in uncertain succession—thickly studded, like Lake George in the United States, with islands, every island consisting of successive letters—lakes which it is impossible to reduce into one

uninterrupted surface. To take a long walk, and meanwhile to read Young's Night Thoughts chalked in huge characters on a wall, would be a cheerless occupation, but it would probably be perfect bliss compared to the effort to read a book or a newspaper with one eye armed with a magnifying-glass of high power.

My magnifier having proved a disastrous failure, and being cast fiercely on the floor, I was again thrust back into a state of internal contemplation, when it occurred to me that in some drawer or other I had an eye-glass, made to be worn on a chain, and expanding, when required, into a spectacle form by means of a pivot. It is an old family treasure, not made for me, and, as it does not exactly suit my sight, I am not in the habit of wearing it. Nevertheless, my forlorn condition forced its image into my memory, and I recollected that on rare occasions I had used it for purposes not merely ornamental. So I rummaged the drawer, and, having found it, was delighted to perceive that it suited my sight much better than I expected. My joy was transient. I was not, indeed, hurled at once into despair, as by the magnifier, but I glided down on an inclined plane to the same undesirable abyss. The glasses themselves are tolerable, but the machinery of the pivot is loose and capricious, so that the instrument sits uncertainly on the nose, and requires constant adjustment to be in a proper position with respect to the eyes. A pen that only marks at hap-hazard would check the fine frenzy of the most inspired poet, and certainly was never plucked from the wing of Pegasus. In like manner an optical instrument that keeps on oscillating between chiaro-oscuro and partial blindness is not favourable to reading, even if we set aside the galling inconvenience occasioned by holding a book in one hand, and something else in the other. I did not dash my eye-glass to the ground with the fury I had lavished on the magnifier, but I laid it down with a sigh, and, folding my arms, calmly resigned myself to my misery.

Much time had not elapsed when a resident in the house cheered me with the glad tidings that a friend of his was about to call, who wore spectacles, and would no doubt lend them for an hour or so. There was a vague belief that the condition of his eyesight was similar to mine, though on what fact this hypothesis was founded I have been unable to discover. However, the most fallacious hope is better, while it

lasts; than none at all, as Dante clearly perceived, when he excluded hope of every kind from the place of torment. I greedily swallowed the welcome theory, and my anxiety for the arrival of the wealthy visitor became intense. He came, my deplorable case was stated to him, and the spectacles were brought into my room. I snatched them up, I put them on, I grasped a newspaper, and I beheld—an impenetrable fog. Still, I had suffered too much not to struggle a little with adverse destiny, and I found that by making the paper almost touch the tip of my nose, I could read with tolerable facility. For about half an hour I got on pretty well, but soon a new source of oppression came upon me. As I have already stated, I am naturally long-sighted. Now, by the borrowed spectacles, my whole habit of life was reversed; I had become artificially short-sighted, and I could not bear my changed condition. I sent down the newspaper and the spectacles with thanks, and relapsed into melancholy.

On the previous evening I had heard of a remarkable gentleman, who excelled all the rest of his species in the art of doing nothing. When at the seaside, he could, I was told, sit on one chair, and lean forward on the back of another, contemplating the waves for hours, and deriving the utmost satisfaction from the contemplation. Ah! I could envy him. I had no waves to contemplate, and if they had been before me, I should have grown weary of looking at them after the first half-hour. There is a fine old English song entitled *My Mind to Me a Kingdom is*, which may be found in *Percy's Reliques*, and which inculcates the expediency of relying exclusively on one's own mental resources. Happy those who can follow its teaching, but this does not suit every temperament. The Malcontent in John Marston's old play strongly despises the song, and all who use it. I simply admired and envied. Then I remembered how Spinoza, that he might live in a state of independence favourable to the pursuit of his bold metaphysical speculation, earned his daily bread by grinding optical glasses. Had he no secondary motive for his choice of this particular branch of industry? May he not have conceived the possibility of a wretched condition like mine, and resolved to do his best to avert the dire calamity? If I had been able to make for myself a pair of spectacles, whenever I was at home, what hours of misery would have been avoided! Thought followed thought, until at last I hit

on the notion of recording my sufferings in black and white, and this notion resulted in the paper which I now conclude.

SHIPWRECK.

On the smiling sea was never a curl,
On the bright sky never a frown;
Never an omen of coming fate,
When my beautiful bark, with her costly freight,
In the glory of noon, went down.

Boldly launched from a quiet shore;
Well framed with storms to cope;
By Youth and Courage nobly manned;
The sails were woven by Love's own hand,
The rudder was held by Hope.

The merciless sun shone full and fair,
The pitiless waves were calm.
No whisper of woe in the wooing breeze,
The gulls poised over the sleeping seas,
The treacherous air was balm.

With happy laughter, with joyous dreams,
We glided in fearless faith;
Then—the sullen jar on the sunken rock;
The grinding crash, the horrible shock;
The headlong plunge to death.

A moment's whirl of boiling foam,
A shriek through the slumberous day,
Then, smooth blue waters and calm blue skies,
And the startled birds with their keen dark eyes,
Intent on their darting prey.

The bright sea dimpled, the bright sun shone,
With nor cloud nor white crest flecked;
A thousand barks sailed gaily past,
A thousand flags light shadows cast,
Where my beautiful boat was wrecked.

Wrecked, with its hopes, its loves, its trusts,
Sunk deep to the sea-weeds brown,
The great world turns and the great waves break;
What should either heed of the moan we make,
When a life or a ship goes down?

A TRIP TO THE LAND OF SCOTT.

PART IV.

OBAN, or the "White Bay," that at the beginning of the present century was a little, unfrequented, almost unknown fishing village, consisting of a few white huts or cottages along the shore, with a population of two or three hundred people, scarcely one of whom could speak a word of English, is now a fashionable resort and a place of so much bustle and activity, from June to October, as to be well entitled to the sobriquet it has acquired of the "Charing Cross of the Highlands." Even so recently as the winter of 1842, people bound for the island of Mull, scarcely eight miles distant, have been detained by stress of weather at Oban for as long as three weeks, before a vessel would venture into the Sound, to convey them to Tobermory. But steam has changed all this, and brought, not alone

Mull, but all the islands of the Hebrides within reach of civilisation. Were there but bathing accommodation, and were the landed proprietors not so churlish as to extend their supposed, but very questionable, rights of seclusion down to high-water mark, and virtually to shut out the public from the sea-shore in front of their domains, Oban would be one of the pleasantest summer residences in Great Britain. But to behold the sea, and be prevented from getting a dip into it except from a boat, is disappointing, if not exasperating, and drives many people away, who would otherwise be glad to spend the summer months in a place so beautiful. Scottish landed proprietors—especially of the smaller order—seem to treat the public as an enemy, and jealously exclude both the native and the stranger from their picturesque domains; offering in this respect a very unfavourable contrast to their English counterparts. If the Oban people had public spirit enough to keep the sea-shore free for promenaders, and at certain times of the morning and evening for bathers, they would add much to the existing attractions to summer visitors.

Few remain even for a couple of days in Oban without making an excursion to the ancient castle of Dunstaffnage, one of the most remarkable ruins in Great Britain. It is but five miles distant, and if the traveller wishes to extend his walk or his ride, he has but to proceed two miles further to the inn at Connell Ferry, to the Falls of Lora, mentioned in Ossian, and to the wild scenery of Loch Etive. The old tower of Dunolly Castle, one of the most prominent objects in the bay, the grounds of which extend to the skirts of the town, is first visited, if permission can be obtained. The castle was formerly the stronghold of the Macdougals of Lorne—one of the most ancient families in the Highlands, whose descendants are among the few who can boast of a similar antiquity, and still retain the original homesteads of their race. Of the old castle nothing remains but a square tower, which, like all its contemporaries, has been rendered useless by the invention of artillery. The fancy of Wordsworth seems to have been greatly excited by an eagle which was long held captive in the tower, for he indited no less than three sonnets, by no means among his best, to this poor bird—on behalf of which he declared both the castle and the rock to be dishonoured. He must have been in distress for a subject when he wrote:

Dishonoured rock and ruin! that by law
Tyrannic keep the bird of Jove embarr'd
Like a lone criminal whose life is spared!
Vexed is he, and screams loud!

This was once thought to be poetry; and, as nine people out of ten scarcely know the difference between prose and verse, it is quite possible that many excellent persons admire it still. The eagle, celebrated by Wordsworth's lament over its hard fate, was worried to death by thoughtless or brutal visitors, who, but for Wordsworth, would never have heard of it. Alas, poor eagle! and alas for the penalties that have to be paid by the famous!

Dunstaffnage claims attention as one of the most ancient castles in Great Britain—so ancient that its builder's name is lost in the darkness of the mythologic ages. Some date it from the third century before the Christian era, some from the fifth century after; which latter is by far the likelier supposition of the two. It occupies the summit of a mass of rock, varying from ten to thirty feet in height, the sides of which have been partially cut away, so as to give it the appearance of a component part of the building. The ruin is about four hundred feet in circumference, and the walls are about fifty feet in height, and of an average of ten feet in thickness. The castle was the royal residence of the kings of the Dalriadic race, who ruled over the west of Scotland from the early part of the sixth century till the year 850, when Kenneth Macalpine united in his own person the sovereignty of the Scots and Picts. Here Kenneth is reported to have held parliaments and assemblies of his nobles; and here was placed, though nobody knows when, the celebrated stone, afterwards removed to Scone, and now in Westminster Abbey, which for upwards of a thousand years has been considered the palladium of Scotland. The tradition was, that wherever that stone was placed, *there* should the Scots hold regal sway, or as Boethius expressed it:

Ni fallat fatum, Scoti, quocunque locatum
Invenient lapidem, regnare tenente ibidem.

From the time of Kenneth to that of John Baliol, every king of Scotland was crowned upon this stone (said, it should be added, to be the identical stone which served the patriarch Jacob for a pillow, when he had his memorable vision of the ladder and the angels); but King Edward the First carried it off in triumph to Westminster Abbey, where it still remains. Thus the charm was broken for upwards of three

centuries, until the accession of James the First, the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, restored the authority of the legend. Patriotic Scotsmen still assert that the stone, though in Westminster and not in Scotland, vindicates its ancient renown as the symbol of Scottish supremacy, inasmuch as the House of Hanover, all whose members have been crowned upon it, are the descendants of the royal House of Stuart, through the mother of George the First. As butterflies are not to be broken on the wheel, nor legends to be as solemnly treated as historical facts, it would be idle to argue seriously about the stone of Scone, or to say any more about it than that it is a very remarkable and ancient relic, with a very curious history. On the broad top of the castle wall are placed the little brass guns, dredged up some years ago from the entrance of Loch Etive, which the guide and the guide-books represent to have belonged to one of the luckless vessels of the Spanish Armada. But as that expedition came to a disastrous end in the year 1588, and as the largest of the guns bears the inscription, not very legible, but to be made out easily enough by an expert, that it was cast in Amsterdam by one Ahasuerus Costen in the year 1700, the original ownership of the guns is palpably not such as tradition asserts. Dunstaffnage is still nominally a royal castle, authority over which, in the queen's name, is vested in the Duke of Argyll, as keeper.

From Dunstaffnage to Connell Ferry is an easy walk. If the tide be favourable, the traveller will be delighted with the Falls of Lora, and the view up and across Loch Etive, to the land of "Selma of storms," of which Ossian makes frequent mention. The narrow entrance to Loch Etive is barred by a line of low rocks, which are covered at high water. When the tide has partially ebbed, the upper lake retains a portion of the flood water at a higher level than that of the outer sea, and the consequence is the not very usual, but highly picturesque phenomenon, a salt water cataract. The roar of the falls is sometimes heard, with a favourable wind, at a distance of six miles.

But the great excursion, which brings travellers from all parts of the world to Oban, is not the little inland trip, varied and agreeable though it be, but the voyage round the island of Mull, and a visit to the wondrous Cave of Staffa, and the ancient ruins of Iona, where Christianity found a home and a seminary long before Saint

Augustine preached to the men of Kent. The voyage exceeds a hundred miles, and, with the stoppages at Staffa and Iona, occupies a long summer's day—a day well spent, whether the traveller be antiquary, philosopher, poet, or valetudinarian, or none of these, but simply a lover of nature, and a seeker after change and recreation. A bell rings on the quay at seven o'clock to summon the guests from the hotels, great and small, and from the numerous lodging and boarding-houses that line the bay, to be up and stirring, so as to be in time to start at eight o'clock. It depends on the state of the wind whether the southern or the northern route be taken; but the north is the favourite, and at once brings the traveller, while yet his attention is fresh, into the midst of scenery, to every mountain and rock and crag and ruined castle of which is attached a legend, a romance, a history, or a tragedy; though it must be admitted that tragedy seems to predominate in all this misty, gloomy, but most magnificent land. Passing the northern extremity of Kerrera, and obtaining a fine view of Dunolly, and afterwards of Dunstaffnage, the steamer emerges into the great arm of the sea called Loch Linnehe, that runs up to Fort William, and then bears off to Ben Nevis. On our right is the fertile and pastoral island of Lismore, or the "great garden," about ten miles in length and two in breadth, and right before us the Sound of Mull, which separates that large island from the mainland of Morven. "A grander and more impressive scene," says Sir Walter Scott, "both for its natural beauties and associations with ancient history and tradition, can scarcely be imagined." At the extremity of Lismore stands a much-needed lighthouse, attention to which is more specially directed, that the eye may be guided to a small rock, several hundred yards out to sea, which is left bare at low water. It is called the Lady's Rock, and was the scene of an act of atrocious cruelty, attempted towards the end of the fifteenth century, by Lachlan Maclean, of Duart, on the person of his wife, a sister of the Earl of Argyll. Either from settled aversion, or a design to be rid of the lady that he might marry some one else, he had her conveyed at low water to this rock, and there left, as he thought, to be overwhelmed by the rising tide. But, fortunately, as the water was rising above her waist, her cries for help were heard by some of her brother's clansmen, who were fishing in a boat off

Lismore. She was rescued from her peril just as the advancing tide was on a level with her breast. Maclean, unaware of her deliverance, had a mock funeral celebrated in Duart Castle, and assumed all the outward symbols and shows of grief of a distressed widower. It has been said, in extenuation of this very eccentric conduct, that the lady had twice attempted to stab him, that she was an untamable virago, and that as Maclean did not like to shed her blood, he thought it a milder, but equally effective process, to try the tranquillising power of cold water. However this may be, the lady's friends were indignant, and vengeance speedily overtook the wicked husband, who was assassinated in his bed in Edinburgh, by John Campbell, the lady's second brother. On this incident Thomas Campbell, the author of the *Pleasures of Hope*, founded his well-known but mediocre ballad of Glenara, and Joanna Baillie her fine tragedy of the *Family Legend*.

Duart Castle, now in ruins, is almost immediately opposite, on the eastern extremity of Mull, and commands the entrance of the Sound. It is asserted to have been originally erected by the Norwegians, when they exercised the sovereignty of the Hebrides; but this, though probable, is doubtful. Duart Castle is first mentioned on sure authority in a deed under the great seal of Donald, Lord of the Isles, in the year 1390, by which the castle and lands adjoining are granted to Lachlan MacGillean, or Maclean. The Macleans of Duart have since that time been considered the chiefs of the Clan Maclean. It is related of one of them that, in the year 1542, wishing to proceed to Edinburgh, and being naturally anxious that he should come to no hurt, in a civilised capital, at the hands of a king and a government whose laws—like all other Highland chieftains of his time—he had systematically violated whenever it suited his interest, his passion, and his caprice, he procured, after a great deal of negotiation, a safe-conduct from King James the Fifth, the father of Queen Mary. The document set forth that "Hector MacClane of Dowart," might visit the king at Edinburgh, "unattached, unarrested, unpursued, unvexed, untroubled, undisturbed, unhurt, and unharmed!"

The castle of Ardtornish, on the other side of the Sound, is finely situated at the entrance of Loch Aline, or the "beautiful lake," and is built upon a grassy point, projecting from the Morven shore. It was the residence of the Lords of the Isles, in

the days when those potentates exercised regal sway in the Hebrides, and where, at least on one occasion, they treated with the King of England as potentate with potentate—king with king. The admirers of Sir Walter Scott's poetry will remember the splendid opening stanzas of the *Lord of the Isles*, in which he introduces a description of the rugged walls of the castle of Ardtornish, and of the sylvan scenery of green Loch Aline.

The castle of Aros is the third that claims attention, and is situated at the opening of the bay of the same name, and finely perched upon the summit of a rocky hill, a landmark visible for many miles. This also was a residence of the Lords of the Isles, among others, of the "mighty Somerled."

The castles of Duart, Ardtornish, Aros, Mingary, and others that are not visible from the course taken by the steamer, seem all to have been constructed on the same principle, and after the same, or nearly the same design. "Nothing," say the Messrs. Anderson of Inverness, in their elaborate *Guide Book to the Highlands and Islands*, "can be more wild than the situations chosen for these fortresses; sometimes as detached islets or pinnacles; more generally as promontories surrounded on three sides by the sea; and on high precipitous rocks, commanding an extensive view, and ready communication with the water. Straight and narrow stairs, little better than stone ladders, and arched vaults, were a frequent mode of access, and in some cases between the tops of these stairs and the main building, yawning chasms intervened, across which, as occasion required, a slender drawbridge was lowered. Rude but strong buttresses propped up the walls, which occasionally were constructed at a distance from the principal keep, so as to form a court or ballium." Not one of these ancient places of strength is either inhabited or inhabitable, and few remain in the families of their ancient possessors. Successful trade has invaded the Hebrides, as well as all other beautiful spots within the British Isles, and the grand and gloomy Ardtornish itself—once the abode of royalty, when royalty meant something more than show—is the property of an English gentleman enriched by commerce.

Rounding a little island, which acts as a breakwater and protection, the steamer enters a bay surrounded by steep and beautifully wooded banks, and lets off steam at the quay of Tobermory, or the "well of Mary,"

the largest town or village, and the nominal capital, of the island of Mull. Tobermory knows nothing of ancient feudalism, or of the Lords of the Isles, or other warlike Highland chieftains. It is a place of the present, not of the past, and was never heard of in the world until the year 1788, when it consisted but of two cottages. In the year 1861 it contained a population of upwards of sixteen hundred, principally engaged in the deep-sea fisheries and the coasting trade. It owes its existence to the British Society for extending the Fisheries, under whose auspices cottages were built, fishing-boats procured, and encouragement held out to the population of the interior to devote themselves to the cultivation of that great farm, the sea, which has no proprietors, for which there is no rent to pay, and which yields a harvest as bountiful as the corn or potatoes of the land, in the shape of herrings, ling, and codfish. The experiment was only partially successful, but it created Tobermory. Its inhabitants, with the internal trade of a large island behind them, and the wants of coasting vessels to supply, manage not only to live, but to prosper; and did the neighbouring landed proprietors see fit to "fuc" or let out their land on building leases for ornamental villas and seaside quarters, there can be little doubt that Tobermory might be made one of the pleasantest and most fashionable resorts in the Highlands.

On the dispersion of the great Spanish Armada, one of the storm-tossed vessels of the fleet, the *Florida*, took refuge in the bay of Tobermory, but shortly afterwards went down like a shot with all hands on board. The true cause of the catastrophe was never ascertained, but popular superstition was at no loss to account for it. There was said to be on board a beautiful Spanish lady—young, fascinating, and loving, with whom Maclean of Duart, the greatest man in Mull, became desperately enamoured at first sight. In vain did his lawful spouse remonstrate with him on his guilt and folly; in vain did she resort to the artillery of tears and sighs to win back his allegiance; in vain did she, with jealous anger, threaten all sorts of vengeance; her infatuated partner could not be withdrawn from the side of the Andalusian charmer, who charmed him too completely and too well. In this emergency Lady Maclean took counsel of the witch who dwelt in the corries of Ben More, paid her fee, whatever it was, and was promised a speedy deliverance from the

fascinating wiles of her successful rival. And the witch kept her word; in fact, went far beyond the original bargain or the real necessities of the case; for she not only immolated the fair Andalusian, but the whole crew and officers of the ill-fated *Florida*, to the vengeance of the slighted wife. By infernal agency she bored a hole under the water-line of the ship, scuttled her, in short, in the dead of night, none on board escaping but a cabin-boy, who declared, in the words of the ballad which records the story—

... as he battled for life with the tide,
That he saw the fair lady of Spain by his side,
And a lank skinny hand that came up through the
 spray,
And twined in her tresses as floating she lay,
And heard the loud laughter of fiends in the air
As she sank mid the waves with a shriek of despair.

The false lord of Duart was not on board at the time, which, all things considered, may have been as lucky for him as it was for his injured wife.

On emerging from the bay of Tobermory, the steamer quits the Sound, and enters Loch Sunart, having the bold coasts of Mull on the left, and the gloomy steepes and mountain fortresses of Ardnamurchan on the right. Turning to the westward, she proceeds in a direct course for the far-famed Isle of Staffa, and "the group of islets grey," as Scott calls the Treshnish Isles, which sentinel the approach to that wonder of the ocean. On the shore of Mull, the headland of Calliach, or of the Old Woman, is generally pointed out to the passing traveller as the favourite resort of the poet Campbell, when, in his youth, he acted as tutor to a Highland family at Sunipol, and where, in the contemplation of the surrounding scenery, he imbued his mind with those poetic images which afterwards found expression in the *Pleasures of Hope*. Further south is Ulva, where is supposed to have resided that Laird of Ulva whose abduction of the fair daughter of Lord Ullin, and unhappy fate, forms the subject of one of the poet's most spirited ballads. The Treshnish Isles, of which there are five important enough to their owners to possess names, are all uninhabited, but yield good pasturage during the summer months to the flocks and herds of the Mull farmers, of whose farms they form a portion. One of them, called the Dutchman's Cap, from its resemblance in shape to an old-fashioned hat of the Vandyke period, remains long in sight. Far beyond it, if the weather be clear, may be discovered two others, the outermost of

all the British group on the western shores of the Atlantic, the low but populous and fertile islands of Coll and Tiree.

Staffa, until a near approach, looks but an unshapely rock, alone amid the melancholy main. And, were it not for its marvellous cave, no stretch of admiring fancy could make it anything more. If the weather be rough, the Atlantic swell renders a visit to the cave a work of difficulty, not to be undertaken except by the young and active. In calm weather, which is rare on these coasts, boats from the steamer can be rowed to the extremity of the cave; but in most instances the boats land their passengers at a sheltered cove on the island, from which there is a steep as well as a boggy track of about half a mile to the entrance of the cave. It has been my good fortune to visit the cave on several occasions; once, in the calmest and sunniest of all possible weather, in a little boat, which put off from Calgary, in Mull, with a party of half a dozen, including a fair Highland maiden, who sang Gaelic songs with the exuberant gladness and generosity of a skylark in mid-air; once again with a piper on board of our small yacht, who caused the vaulted roof of the cave to re-echo with the weird melodies of a pibroch; and thrice, if not oftener, in company with all the miscellaneous and motley crowd of tourists from the steamer. It is in this last fashion that ninety-nine people out of a hundred see the Cave of Fingal, which, seen in any way, at any time, and in any company, is one of the grandest sights of Nature. The admiration of a crowd of visitors usually vents itself in shouts, and yells, and whoops, and halloos, possibly to try the effect of the echoes in a place so unlike anything else with which their experience has familiarised them; and though I prefer to see Fingal's Cave without such noisy accessories, I am gregarious enough not to find fault with the almost childish delight which people vent in this manner, when they enter into this grand vestibule of Nature's palace.

Doctor Johnson, in his celebrated visit to the Hebrides, with his faithful Boswell in company, was prevented by the stormy weather from landing upon Staffa, so that the world has lost the description he might have made upon it; but the learned doctor was less struck with the great aspects of Nature than with the traces left by man upon Nature's face, so that perhaps the world has not lost very much by his en-

forced silence. Scott and Wordsworth have both described the cave in eloquent passages, with which nearly all readers are familiar, and which have been hashed and rehashed in every guide-book that has been published during the last forty years. Other poets have been inspired by the same high theme, and have written true poetry in its praise, as perhaps the authors of future guide-books, who may not choose to follow in the old ruts of their predecessors, will perhaps discover.

The tower of the little ruined cathedral of Iona, distant about nine miles, is plainly visible from the Cave of Fingal, and thitherwards, having reassembled her scattered passengers, the steamer directs her course. Once more disembarking in small boats, the passengers are rowed ashore, and are accosted almost before they land by a motley group of barefooted children, ragged, unkempt, but bright-eyed and healthy-looking, assembled on the shore to welcome them, after a fashion peculiar to the island. All these children, with a few of their elders among them, are bent upon a commercial attack on the pockets of the stranger, and present him with sea-shells and small green pebbles that abound on the coast, in return for such pence or shillings as his liberality may offer. These children are for the most part so utterly ignorant of English, that I for one would be wholly reconciled to their importunity if it could be arranged that half the money given to them should be set aside for the payment of an English schoolmaster. The Gaelic, like its cognate branches of the Celtic spoken in Ireland, Wales, and the Isle of Man, is a very ancient, beautiful, and interesting language, which every philologist should study, and without a thorough understanding of which no one should presume to compile an English dictionary. At the same time, it is an impediment in the path of knowledge in every part of the British Isles where the people speak no other. If the Highlanders can be taught both English and Gaelic, there is no reason why the beautiful Gaelic should be forgotten or uncultivated; but if they are to have but one language, Gaelic should unquestionably be allowed to die out.

Iona is the Icolmkill, or island of Columba's Church, of the geographers of the last century. It was anciently called the Druid's Isle, the Isle of the Saints, and the Holy Isle. Its present name is either derived from I. Shona, the Holy Isle, or

I. Thona, the Isle of the Waves (in both words the "Sh" and the "Th" are silent). It is not remarkable for beauty or grandeur, and is absolutely without natural charms or attractions of any kind. But its early history is such as to render it one of the most interesting places in the world. During the four first centuries of the Christian era, a Druidical college or university was established in this remote corner, far away from the perturbations and wars of Continental Europe, during all which time it kept alight the lamp of knowledge, and of a civilisation very superior to that which prevailed in more southern and more accessible regions. In the sixth century, how and by what means does not appear to be very accurately known, this illustrious island, as Dr. Johnson calls it, became the home of an equally remarkable brotherhood of Christians, called Culdees, under the abbacy of Colm, or St. Columba. Beyond the limits of a circle of forty or fifty miles in diameter from this Holy Isle as a centre, the British Isles of England, Scotland, and Ireland, were sunk, if not in the darkest mists of paganism, in the twilight of Druidism; but here the light of Christianity, as then understood, burned pure and bright; and hither came students of theology from Ireland, Norway, Denmark, and even from France, Switzerland, Italy, and Spain. Why the Christian brotherhood of Iona were called Culdees, has never been satisfactorily explained, though it may be conjectured the name belonged originally to their predecessors, the Druids, who taught the Chaldean mysteries of the stars, and brought their religion into Britain from the plain of Shinar. Of the many Gaelic derivations of the name, that of Gille or Ceille De, the servants of God, seems to be the most probable. From Iona a regular propagandism of the Christian faith was organised under St. Columba and his successors, of which the members spread themselves all over Europe, as will be seen from the eloquent history of the Monks of the West, which the world owes to the late Comte de Montalembert. In consequence of its sanctity and presumed inviolability, Iona became the sepulchre of the kings of Scotland and of Norway, and of most of the great feudal chieftains of Scotland and Ireland. The cathedral of St. Oran, and the surrounding grave-yard, received their remains; and many elegant crosses of exquisite stone workmanship were erected to mark their place of sepulture, of which some few, the admiration

of all travellers, have escaped the ravages of the ignorant, and the perhaps crueller ravages of the learned, and still testify to the piety and the civilisation of an age, which it has been too much the fashion to condemn as quasi-barbarian. A Gaelic tradition, that still holds its ground among the people, asserts that before the last day the whole world shall be submerged by a second deluge; but that Iona alone, of all the green places of the earth, shall float above the waters. Another tradition asserts that annually, upon New Year's Eve, St. Columba, in a spectral ship or boat, sails through the Hebrides to Iona, that all the royal, noble, and sainted dead rise from their graves to meet him on the shore, and that he ascends to the tower of St. Oran, and deliberately counts his beloved Isles of the West to see that none of them are missing. The readers of Shakespeare will remember that the body of the gracious Duncan, after his murder, was conveyed to Icolmkill, to be buried among his ancestors.

Iona is about three miles in length, by one and a half in breadth, and contains a superficies of somewhat less than two thousand acres, of which about six hundred are in a state of cultivation, yielding a not very bountiful subsistence, eked out by the tribute of the sea, to a population of between three and four hundred. The sole proprietor is the Duke of Argyll, who has recently published a volume on the history and antiquities of his venerable possession.

All the way from Iona, round the southern shore of Mull and back again to Oban, the scenery is wild and majestic, and the whole voyage, for beauty and grandeur to delight the eye, and for suggestion and instruction to captivate the mind, is not to be paralleled in any part of the world.

From Oban to Glasgow the traveller has a choice of routes, if he would not pass twice over the same ground. The most beautiful is that by the Pass of Brander, Loch Awe, and the bases of Ben Cruachan—the scenes of Sir Walter Scott's painful story of the Highland Widow—and thence to Glenfalloch and the head of Loch Lomond.

During all our course in this Trip into the Land of Scott, the recollections of the great poet and novelist have everywhere accompanied us; and in taking leave of him, and of those parts of Scotland which his genius has more particularly made his own, I cannot do better than borrow the words of Lord Meadow-

bank, when he proposed Scott's health at the great dinner of the Theatrical Fund in Edinburgh, in July, 1827, when the author of Waverley first publicly avowed the authorship of his immortal fictions: "The Scotch owe to him, as a people, a large and heavy debt of gratitude. He it is who has opened to foreigners the grand and characteristic beauties of their country. It is to him that they owe that their gallant ancestors, and the struggles of their illustrious patriots, who fought and bled in order to obtain and secure that independence and that liberty which they now enjoy, have obtained a fame no longer confined to the boundaries of a remote and comparatively obscure nation, and who has called down upon their struggle for glory and freedom the admiration of foreign countries. He it is who has conferred a new reputation on the Scottish national character, and bestowed on Scotland an imperishable name, were it only for having given birth to himself."

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LXXVII. AT ROYDON.

LADY VERNON was, as usual, busy in the library at Roydon, noting letters to be answered by her secretary, and answering others which she thought deserved the distinction of an autograph.

With a face marble-like and serene, she is promoting the conversion of the human race to Christianity. To make them all, even as she is, is worth a great sacrifice. And, beside teaching them to walk in the light, and tend to heaven, she promotes, as we know, all sorts of benevolent designs, schools, mild reformatories, temperance associations, savings-banks on new and liberal principles, building societies for the poor, farms for their employment and sustentation, loan societies, convalescent hospitals, asylums for all sorts of deserving and suffering people.

If this pale, still lady, with the black hair and large grey eyes, had her way with the world, you would know it no longer. There would not be a sorrowful soul or a writhing body on earth. It would be a paradise, and heaven, anticipated, would reign in every corner of the globe. One wide, universal heaven, musical with angelic joy and gratitude. Ay, good reader, it would be all heaven; except that one small hell, very deep, very murky, in which stands motionless the white figure of her child.

In momentary reveries, as she pens her letter to the president of the Benevolent Society in Aid of Children, by Death, or other Causes, bereft of the Tender Care of Parents, the eye of her spirit opens, and she sees, through the letter, beneath her feet, far below, in the nether earth, that pale hell, and raises her face momentarily, as if from the breath of a furnace.

She looks round on books and busts, and through the windows on the majestic trees, and is reassured by a sight of the material world about her.

"I have duties, some painful, but many happy," she thought. "I try to acquit myself of all."

And when she looked on the long list of her charities and benefactions, and on the antique binding of the folio, containing no less than fifty-seven distinct addresses from as many admirable societies, each acknowledging with decorous panegyric her magnificent benefactions; addresses or resolutions, proposed and seconded by bishops, eminent dissenters, and religious peers, amidst the unanimous applause of meaner Christians—could she feel otherwise than reassured?

She could not say she was happy; some of her duties pained her; but she heaved over these latter a comfortable sigh, and her irrepressible self-esteem reasserted itself.

It was at this moment, just as she had resumed her writing, that her tall footman stood at the door, and informed her that Mr. Dawe and Mr. Marston had arrived in a chaise, had come in, and had asked particularly to see her.

"Did you say I was not very well?"

"Yes, my lady."

"I don't think those gentlemen can have understood—go and tell Mr. Dawe that I am not sufficiently well to see any one to-day."

So said Lady Vernon a little peremptorily, with her head high, and the footman backed from the door and vanished.

Lady Vernon sat, with a very still respiration, and her pen resting on her desk, without a stir, awaiting the issue of a diplomacy which she feared.

She could have had no difficulty if it had been any one else on earth. But with Mr. Dawe it was a different matter. His relations with her were very peculiar. His persistence was formidable. And she knew, if he thought himself right, he would, not very improbably, carry his point.

The hectic fires, those signals of danger,

were already burning in each cheek, under her cold steady eyes.

"What detains him all this time?" she asked, in her solitude, with an angry tap on her desk.

There is more suspense in this trifling situation than is pleasant. She is in the acutest irritation of impatience.

The footman returns, and finds her apparently busily writing.

"What is it, Edward?" she asked, a little peevishly, glancing toward the door.

"Please, my lady, Mr. Dawe says that his business is particularly hurgent, and that you would be displeased, my lady, if he went away without acquainting you with it."

"Oh!" said Lady Vernon, gently; "then you had better show him, and the other gentleman, his friend, into the great drawing-room. And let some one tell Latimer that I want her, and tell Mr. Penrhyn that I should be obliged to him to come here for a few minutes."

"Yes, my lady," and again the footman disappeared.

The maid arrived before the secretary.

"Latimer, I may have to speak to Mr. Dawe about business; he's here now; and I don't feel strong, and I think the best thing I can take is a little sal-volatile, and do you just put some in water, the same quantity you did yesterday, and fetch it to me."

"Yes, my lady—you're not looking very well—they should not come to trouble you about business now."

"I think not, Latimer," she answered. "But it is old Mr. Dawe, and I suppose he fancies I should see him if I were dying; people are so selfish. I won't if I can help it; but if I must, I must, and at all events let me have my sal-volatile."

"She's worriting herself over everything, and she looks as if she was a good half-ways into a fever this minute," remarked Mrs. Latimer, straight and thin in her black silk dress, as she hurried up the stairs to execute her message.

She had hardly gone when a knock came at the door.

"Come in."

The secretary came in, with the peculiar drowsiness of air and face that tedious work, too long continued, bestows. He was not sorry of the little interruption, and an opportunity of lifting his head and shaking his ears, and although Jack was growing a dull boy, he smiled politely, and I think, could have yawned.

"You wished to speak to me, Lady Vernon?"

"Yes, won't you sit down? I wanted to tell you that Mr. Dawe, with a friend, has called, and wants to talk with me about business; and I should be so glad to avoid it, if possible, I feel so poorly. So I'm going to ask you kindly to see him for me, and, if it is anything that you can settle, I should be so much obliged if you would arrange it, as I really don't feel able to talk at any length to-day, and you could make him understand that."

"Oh, certainly—of course he could not think—I have only to explain," said the secretary, with polite peremptoriness.

"Thank you so very much," she said, more glad of his confident prognostics than her pride would have confessed.

In came Latimer with the sal-volatile and water.

"Thanks," said Lady Vernon. "I'll take it now."

And she drank it off.

"Well, my lady, I must tell you, you're not looking yourself; and don't you go and bother yourself about Mr. Dawe's business, my lady; it is a shame all the trouble they puts upon you."

"I've sent Mr. Penrhyn to try whether he can't arrange it for me, and I'm in hopes he can. Thanks, that will do, Latimer, you can go."

Mr. Penrhyn's return was delayed long enough to raise a strong hope in her mind that Mr. Dawe was, after all, avoidable.

In a few minutes more the secretary returned.

"Well, what is it about?" asked Lady Vernon, affecting to raise her eyes from the letter she was *not* writing.

"Upon that point, Lady Vernon, I'm as much in the dark as when I left you."

"Oh!"

"I pressed him all I could, but he insists he can open the matter only to you, Lady Vernon, and he seems a very obstinate old gentleman."

The secretary she fancied was curious; but his eyes, as he related the result of his interview, were lowered steadily to the table.

"And I then asked him to write a note. I hope, Lady Vernon, I did as you would have wished?"

"Certainly," said Lady Vernon. "Thanks—and that is it?"

She extended her fingers to receive it.

It was a pencilled note, merely turned down at the corner. She did not open it.

"He is still in the drawing-room?"

"He and his friend," acquiesced Mr. Penrhyn.

"Did he say it was anything of much importance?" she asked, looking wistfully at the note which she was, somehow, reluctant to open.

"No, not exactly; he said he must decline opening his business, I think those were his words, except to you, Lady Vernon; and it required some little pressing to get him to write."

"Yes—I dare say—and he indicated nothing more?" and she looked again wistfully at the note.

"Nothing. He is more of a listener than a talker. I don't think he uttered twenty words."

"Yes, he is silent. Thanks, Mr. Penrhyn, I think you have done everything possible for me—thank you very much."

"You don't wish me to return to him, Lady Vernon?"

"No, thanks, I'll look into this, and send him an answer. I shan't trouble you any more at present."

So Mr. Penrhyn made his bow, and Lady Vernon was alone.

She knew perfectly what Mr. Dawe had come about. But her case was too strong. She defied him to pick a hole in her proofs. Was there not a responsibility and a duty?

She opened his note. It said:

DEAR BARBARA,—I must see *you*. Your secretary will not do. What I have to say is too harrowing. You may anticipate.

She read these words with a sullen chill and sickness; for the first time a maternal thrill, like a pain in an unknown nerve, stole through her. The words had touched a thought that had before been peremptorily "laid."

Has the miserable girl made away with herself?

She felt faint for a moment.

But the next words cleared his meaning up:

I have preferred seeing you, and obtaining your prompt acquiescence, to taking a public step. If you deny me an interview, my next measure will be decisive. I shall not postpone action in this grave matter.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD DAWE.

She touched the bell.

"Show Mr. Dawe, but not the gentleman

who came with him, into this room," she said to her footman.

And now, leaning back a little, with her cold gaze fixed on the door, she awaits the conflict.

CHAPTER LXXVIII. DEBATE.

THE servant announces "Mr. Dawe." And that swarthy little gentleman, with wooden features and black wig, walks in, and approaches. There is, as it were, a halo of darkness round him. His countenance shows no excitement; nothing but its customary solemn reserve.

The door closes.

Lady Vernon receives him standing, and does not sit again for some minutes. Mr. Dawe is thus kept standing; and thus the meeting acquires an odd air of formality. He steps up to her as if he had to announce nothing more important than a purchase of fifty pounds' worth of Three-per-Cent stock.

He extends his hand, as usual; but she does not take it.

This coldness, or severity, does not seem to disconcert Mr. Dawe in the slightest degree; in fact, he seems scarcely conscious of it.

"Your reluctance to see me, assures me that you anticipate the subject on which I mean to speak," he began.

"It might have assured you, if my words had not, that I was not well enough to see any one. I can't be certain what subject you mean; but I am pretty sure it is nothing pleasant; you never trouble you head about anything pleasant."

"That is rather true, Barbara," he said, "and this is *not* pleasant. Your daughter Maud has been placed in the madhouse at Glarewoods."

"I have acted with too much reluctance; I have acted under strong pressure from my advisers; I have acted in obedience to urgent medical advice. She is an inmate of Glarewoods, under the care of that good and able man, against whom, even you, will hesitate to venture an ill word—Mr. Damian."

"I know. But Mr. Damian is not there. He's at Brighton. Doctor Antomarchi, no worse and no better, I suppose, than an ordinary mad-doctor, received her, and has, at present, and will have for some time to come, the sole control of that place. The fact has become known to your daughter's friends, who, believing her to be sane, wish to know why she is in a madhouse."

"She is in a madhouse, I answer in the coarse terms you seem best to understand, because she is mad."

"She's not mad; not a bit mad; not half so mad as you," replied the little man, sternly. "The people who intimately associated with her immediately before her imprisonment in that place, are convinced of her sanity, and prepared to depose to it."

Lady Vernon's rising wrath subsided suddenly as these words opened a new vein of suspicion.

"Captain Vivian, you mean," she said, growing deadly pale, with a smile of horrible scorn.

"No, I don't; I mean people who are more likely to be attended to," he answered as sternly.

There was a silence. Lady Vernon looked down. She still thought that Captain Vivian was the mainspring of this untoward movement.

"You seem to think I am bound to give account to you of all I do," she said, in sarcastic tones.

"You, Barbara, seem to think you are accountable to *no* one," he retorted, dryly.

"I am answerable to my God," she replied, with flashing eyes. "My stewardship is to Him, not to you. I'll give no account to you, further than to say, and *that* only to stop slander, that all responsibility is removed from me; that I have been directed by the advice of as able and conscientious men as are to be found in England; and that copies of the depositions, for I chose to reduce the evidence to that shape, are lodged with Mr. Damian."

"May I see them?"

"He has got them, not I," she said, coldly.

Mr. Dawe grunted, after his fashion, and with brows more knit than usual, looked down for a few seconds.

"You have the originals—you can let me see them?" he persisted.

"You have no more claim than any other person; perhaps less. I shan't show them to you without consideration: certainly not now; possibly never. Why, what motive," she broke out, fiercely, "but the noblest, can a mother have in making so terrible a sacrifice of feeling?"

"I, and I *only*, know the existence of a motive," said Mr. Dawe; "and if Satan has put it in your mind to do this——"

"Satan! How dare you talk of Satan to me, sir?" cried the lady in a choking voice, rising with a crimson flush, and

stamping on the floor with pride and hate glaring in her face. "Do you know who I am? Satan in *my* mind! You wicked old man! You *alone* know my secret. That's true. Tell it where you will, and have done with these infamous threats. You may wound, but you can't disgrace me. The world knows something of me. The Christian world. I've done my duty in all things; especially by my daughter; and all the false tongues in England shan't frighten me!"

"You ought to know me, Barbara, by this time. High words, hard words, don't affect me, no more than flatteries do—in at one ear and out at the other," and he touched alternately the sides of his black wig. "Be reasonable. Your violence deprives you of the power of considering consequences. You *have* a powerful motive; and motives, often unrecognised, control our actions. I know what power the death of Maud unmarried would give you by your father's will. I know what it would enable you to do for Elwyn Howard—Captain Vivian, as we style him—your son. I know the sad story of his birth, and of your secret marriage, that turned out to be a nugatory one, with that weak, strange man, Elwyn Howard, the vicar."

"Stop, in God's name!—spare the dead. My noble Elwyn, my pure, noble, heart-broken Elwyn; my first, and best, and only beloved, in his grave!"

And she burst into shrill screaming sobs, and, ringing her hands, walked to and fro in the room.

The little man in the black wig said nothing, but waved his hand toward her again and again, as one beckons a child to be quiet.

The paroxysm subsided, and she stood before him with stern eyes.

"You come to me always like a messenger from the grave. Have I ever seen you but for trouble? Have you ever had a pleasant or even a merciful word for me? Have you ever spared me one pang, or spared the dead or the living in your mission of torture?"

"If it be torture, Barbara, the fault is yours, not mine. I believe she is in her right mind; and I have come to *make* you an offer. Liberate her, and let her case be examined into, here or in London, with her own solicitor to watch her interests, and such of her friends as she may choose to name to attend and lend their aid. If you won't do this I'll take a course you may like less, for I'll not allow her to be

immured there, without an effort to set her free."

"Then you propose to put me formally on my trial, in my own house, on a charge of having entered into a conspiracy to imprison my daughter in a madhouse?"

"You are a self-willed, impetuous woman, Barbara. You are intolerant of argument, and prefer error and illusion to truth when it stands in your way. Look into your heart. Is there nothing there to startle you? When you have done that, call up the past. Consider what happened. You would believe whatever favoured your wishes. You would listen to no warning. With headstrong infatuation you married Elwyn Howard, without the consent or knowledge of your parents. And have you ever known a quiet hour since? All are dead, but I, who know your secret. Your father, your mother, your old nurse, and your husband; he made a cowardly and cruel use of it; but his cruelty does not justify yours, wreaked upon your child. No lesson instructs you. You are what you were—perverse, one-ideal, headstrong. Where you have a sufficient motive nothing will stop you. You don't, perhaps, see the motives that rule you now. You dread, as well you may, the complication which your secret threatens. It would be a brief way of solving this horrible danger to hide Mand Vernon in Glarewoods for the rest of her days. Moreover, it would be a short way to a provision for the child you love, to consign the child you hate to what must attend the incarceration of a spirited girl in such a place, an early death. You live in delusion, a serenity of egotism, from which the stroke of death alone will startle you too late. I will invoke in this case the intervention of the Chancellor, unless you consent to the proposition I have made you."

With these words Mr. Dawe closed the longest speech he was ever known to deliver at a single spell; and in his face and voice there was something more threatening than they had ever evidenced before.

Whiter and whiter grew the handsome face of Lady Vernon as Mr. Dawe proceeded. She rose like an evoked spirit to his incantation, and stood with a countenance in which fear, and rage, and derision were blended with a force worthy of an evil spirit.

"I have listened to your hideous calumny till it is expended. Let it be your comfort that your last act has been worthy of all your former malignant intercourse with me, and that you leave a broken-hearted woman with a curse, and a falsehood, and a threat on your lips. It is our last meeting. I shall never hear your ill-omened voice again. I disdain your offers; I defy your threats." She rang furiously at the bell. "And I command you never more to enter this house, or to presume to claim acquaintance with me."

She turned and walked away from him, into the room.

Hearing the door open, she turned again, and said to the footman who had come in:

"This gentleman is going; show him to the hall-door."

Dawe nodded sullenly at the door of the room, and said in his accustomed tones:

"I shall act strictly on what you have said to me: and as it can't be mended, I accept the terms you prescribe. Farewell, Barbara."

The little figure in the black wig withdrew at his customary gait; his dark wooden face presenting its solemn furrows and accustomed carving, and his voice and his whole demeanour, dry and phlegmatic, as if nothing of interest had occurred.

Trembling, Lady Vernon sat down. There is always a "devil's advocate" to pervert the motives and distort the conduct of the saints, and so it had just been with her. His insults still quivered on her nerves. Does not Satan plague scrupulous consciences with doubts and upbraidings utterly fantastic? The "still small voice" within her had been whispering vaguely the same thing that now she had heard croaked with coarse distinctness by an external voice. It was this harmony and iteration that made that croaking voice eloquent, and when it ceased, left Lady Vernon trembling.

330 P.

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CHAPTER VIII. "IN THE DEAD UNHAPPY NIGHT."

In her room at last. Unseen by Miss Cave, who had remained at the theatre to settle accounts with Dunsany, and to talk over the pros and cons of the suggested Avonmouth season with manager Dobson. Scarcely seen by her sister Rose, who had been awaiting her arrival impatiently, and who rushed forward, directly she entered, to ask her what had been the purport of Gerald Hardinge's communication, but whose love was greater even than her curiosity, and who, on seeing that Madge was ill and suffering, at once consented to postpone her inquiries until the morning.

In her own room at last, with the door locked, her hot heavy clothes thrown aside, and a light dressing-gown donned in their place. There she is, seated at the dressing-table, her hair thrown back over her shoulders, and her chin resting on her hand. The time was now arrived when she could think it all out, the time that she longed for during her weary walk homeward up the Dumpington-road, the time that she longed for as she lay prostrate, dazed, and semi-conscious upon the bed before going to the theatre. She could think it all out now—all—all. Why, good Heavens! even since she was last in that room what a change had swept over the current of her life! What a new vista for the future had been opened up before her!

He did intend that the Australian journey should be merely an excuse for a separation, not merely temporary, but final. When she taxed him with it he acknow-

ledged it. She was glad she had been beforehand with him there; that was one instance, at least, where the cunning on which he so prided himself had not been able to cajole or deceive her. What a moral coward he was! He would have taken leave of her with fine promises and pleasant speeches, and let her go away, and then, when he knew himself to be far beyond her reach, he would have let her know the truth, that he had deserted her and cast her off for ever. Not even then, perhaps; he might have allowed her to go on wearing away her life, hoping against hope, and ignorant of the state of widowhood to which she had long since been abandoned.

Now she knew the worst. Come what might in the future, at least she would not drift into it unprepared. He had spoken plainly enough, said in so many words, that marriage was dissolved between them. He must have had that step in contemplation for some time past; such a resolution was not taken on the spur of the moment. And as she passed in review the recent occasions on which she and Philip Vane had met, and the tone of the few short letters he had written to her, she saw clearly how he had, bit by bit, been loosening the tie—never very strong, save in its legality—which existed between them, and preparing for the final rupture.

And now it had come. "You will never look upon my face again;" that was what he said. What had she done? Had she been so specially wicked, had her life been so specially happy, that she should be visited by an affliction like this, that she should be forced to bear the brunt of the battle alone, quite unaided; more than that, even having to succour and provide for one weaker and younger than herself, without one friend to turn to in her extremity,

without one living soul to speak to her a kind word, or to lend her a helping hand?

Gerald Hardinge! As the thought flashed across her the name rose simultaneously to her lips, and was spoken aloud.

She raised her face from between her hands, where in the agony of her grief she had buried it, and catching sight of its reflection in the glass before her, could not help noticing, all blurred and tear-stained as it was, the delicacy of its features, the sweetness of its expression. She peered at it long and curiously, as though it had been another woman's face, now pitting a dimple with her finger, now tracing with her nail the track of a line or two which had already begun to appear near her eyes. Then suddenly pushing her chair aside she rose to her feet and again muttered aloud, "Gerald Hardinge!"

"The last time that Gerald spoke to me," she continued, pacing to and fro in the room, "I listened to him carelessly and talked to him lightly. Knowing the barrier that existed between us, there was no harm, I thought, in so listening, for it was a break in my dull and dreary life, and a pastime to me, and I knew that Gerald was too much of a gentleman to say anything that might not properly be said to—what he imagined me to be—a good and virtuous girl. Now that barrier exists no longer, and he must learn the truth; I must tell him that I am the deserted wife of another man, that the confidence and companionship which have hitherto existed between us must now be brought to an end, that the terms on which we have hitherto lived, were they to continue, would be dangerous to him and compromising for me. Yes," she added, after a pause, during which she had remained rapt in consideration, "the retribution which Philip Vane will inflict upon me for refusing to obey his commands will be bitter indeed. He can disappear, 'efface himself,' as he says, banish all remembrance of me, if it be not already banished, blot out all traces of his married life, commence a fresh career of dissipation, and look for a new victim to wheedle, and make use of, and desert. He can do all this, for he will be free, while I must remain here, fettered and heart-broken and solitary."

She flung herself prone upon the bed, and clasping her hands behind her head, lay there motionless for some time. When at length she raised her face from the pillow in which it had been hidden, there was on it a strange, odd expression, such as those

who were most intimate with it, had never seen there. A bright scarlet patch burned on each of her cheeks, there was a wild restless look in her large brown eyes, and her lips, ordinarily so soft and mobile, were set and rigid.

"Why should I be solitary?" she broke forth, raising herself on her elbow, and gazing eagerly before her. "Why should his be all the triumph, and mine all the misery? Why, while he creates a fresh life for himself, should I settle down in apathetic wretchedness and dull despair? He said, truly enough, that our secret was our own, that our marriage was known to none but ourselves, and that when he decided upon ignoring it, it would be just as though it had never happened. It was known but to ourselves and to two others, hired witnesses, whom in no human probability I shall ever come across. What is to prevent me, then, from shaking myself free from the shackles, and seeing whether in life there is not yet some happiness in store for me? What is to prevent? My conscience? Duty? The duty I owe to Philip Vane would sit lightly enough upon me; and is it not his wish? 'I will never interfere with your plans and projects, be they what they may,' he swore that, and he will keep his word, only too thankful to lay hold of any act of mine which would tend to our further estrangement and ratify the separation between us.

"And here is Gerald, whose only thought is to take me to his heart, and make me his wife, who, hard worked as he is at the theatre, has been devoting his extra hours in labour to gain a position which he could consider worthy to offer me, and who is steeped to the lips not merely in patient devotion to me, but in the desire to rid me of the burden which I now have to bear, and to render life smooth and easy to me.

"Gerald Hardinge's wife! He asked me to become so at once, why should I refuse? I am older than he is it is true, and my youth has been passed in toil, and, to a certain extent, in privation. But," she added, stopping before the glass, and again surveying her features in it, "I do not think I show the traces of it, I do not think, speaking dispassionately, as Heaven knows I feel, there are many who are better or more attractive-looking, however much my beauty may have palled on Philip Vane.

"Gerald Hardinge's wife! Could I return the love he gives me? My capabilities of loving have not been put to any

severe test; it was that silly admiration of a good-looking face and specious manners which led me to like Philip Vane; the idiotic folly of a schoolgirl, which raves about the colour of a man's eyes, or the shape of his nose; but I doubt whether there was much question of love in the matter. I was sillily fascinated by him in the first few days of our married life; I remember I showed it as much as he would let me, but that is so far off that it seems like a dream. Since then I have been almost constantly separated from him, and when we have met there has been no question of love between us, certainly none shown, even of regard, on his part. I wonder whether I have ever possessed the faculty of loving, and if so, whether it has died out? I think I can answer that question," she said, smiling gravely. "Last night, when Gerald's arm was round me, holding me closely to him, when his face was bending close to mine, when I felt his soft breath on my cheek, and saw the love-light trembling and fading in his eyes, a shiver ran through me from head to foot, and my soul yearned towards him with a passion hitherto strange to it. Ah, why," she cried, clasping her hands above her head, "why should my life be solitary and blank? Why should this wealth of love which I possess be thus wasted? Why should I not solace what remains to me of my youth, and give up such beauty as I still possess to him who prizes it so dearly? I cannot, I will not, let slip this chance which is offered me so opportunely. I will write a line to Gerald telling him that I accept his offer, and am only impatient to call myself his wife, and thus at the same time I will gratify my love for him, and my revenge on Philip Vane."

The scarlet spot on her cheek burned more brightly than before, and the light was still in her eyes, but the muscles of her mouth, instead of being rigid and set, were moving involuntarily, and her lips were full and humid.

She took her blotting-book and ink-stand from off the chest of drawers, arranged them on the table, and sat down to write. But her brain was too much excited, her heart beating far too quickly to admit of her sufficiently steadying her thoughts; and the next moment she was up and pacing the room again to and fro, to and fro. No reminiscences of past misery now; all visions of future happiness with Gerald! How handsome he was, how high-bred and gentlemanly he always

looked! Not even his coarse, common painting-clothes could disfigure him; how softly he always spoke to her, and how he always looked straight into her eyes, not boldly, not triumphantly, but with a strange mixture of diffidence and love. She recollected, too, the long, clinging pressure of his hand. Ah, how she would love him, how she would make up for past years of coldness and neglect. She longed to have him there by her side, that she might tell him how warmly she reciprocated all he had said to her on the previous night. Unable to see him at that instant, she must write to him; that was the next best thing she could do, and she would do so at once.

Seated at the table once again, one hand drumming on the blotting-book, the other idly stretched on the paper in front of her. How should she commence her letter to him? How should she end it? She knew that, she thought. She should put "your wife." His wife? And then the pen slipped from between her fingers, and the other hand ceased drumming, and convulsively grasped the table.

His wife? Not his, but Philip Vane's.

That fact remained indisputable, notwithstanding Philip's repudiation of it, and in spite of all the sophistry which he had talked, and which she had allowed herself to be persuaded into accepting. Philip Vane's wife, in the sight of Heaven, and in the eye of the law. Philip Vane's wife, that was her condition, only to be released therefrom by her or his death.

Ah, what vague hopes she had cherished in placing herself on an equality with him, what fruitless boasts she had made to herself of claiming as much freedom in her future as he had insisted on his! Were she to take the step she had contemplated, were she to accept the position offered to her, the mere prospect of the expectation of which had filled her with happiness and joy inexplicable, what would be the result? In her own secret soul she would know herself, whatever she might pass for to him and to the world, not to be Gerald Hardinge's wife, but his mistress, and to be Philip Vane's wife still. Even if, looking at the happiness which such a prospect opened up to her, and contrasting it with the certain misery of her future, misery embittered a thousandfold by the omnipresent recollection of what might have been, she could have stifled the voice of conscience, and clung to the chance thus offered, what guarantee had she that Philip

Vane might not some day or other put in an appearance upon the scene, and seek to gain advantage by her default? He had sworn that he would not do so, but she knew well enough that to such a man such an oath meant nothing; and then for the mere passing gratification of two passions, revenge and love, she would have entailed misery not merely upon herself, but upon the boy who had offered his life for her disposal, and so frankly and loyally had placed his future in her hands.

Following out with strictest scrutiny her self-examination, Madge felt compelled to confess that there were several reasons for giving up the step on which she had so recently determined. The difference of age between them must not be lost sight of. It was well enough now while Gerald was under the influence of his boyish passion, and while she yet retained enough of her youthful beauty to keep him in thrall, and to render her an object of admiration among his friends. But in a few, very few years' time she would have lost her bloom and be advancing towards middle age, while he would yet be in the prime of early manhood. What should she expect then but what she had already undergone! Not that it was possible Gerald could ever treat her as Philip Vane had treated her; he was too manly, too high spirited, too tender hearted; but would it not be worse for her than anything she had yet endured, to see that she was merely tolerated by a man to whom her whole soul was given, and in whom the wild ardour of love had been superseded by a feeling of mere tenderness and compassion?

No! no! a thousand times no! She could bear anything but that! Better pluck out this passion of recent growth, though she plucked out her heart and her life at the same time, than let it have a short season of bloom and a long period of withering decay! The mirage was fast vanishing away, and again the long level sands of the desert of life which she was compelled to travel, with no well of hope, no oasis of rest and happiness in sight, lay stretching out before her. The shining sands had to be traversed, and the bubbling fountains and the palm-trees' shade had proved mere mockeries of mental vision, so let her proceed upon her pilgrimage at once, and give up all further thought of those unsubstantial and impossible delights! It could not, must not be. And when Madge Pierrepont had once faced that fact, although in facing it

she went through such mental torture as since the world's creation has been suffered only by those white-robed few who sacrifice their all in all for duty's sake, she determined in carrying out her resolutions, and came out of the conflict worn, and pale, and haggard indeed, but victorious and determined.

What was to be done? The proper course for her to pursue was, as she knew, to see Gerald, and tell him all. But that she could not do. She dared not trust herself. Her courage was insufficient, not merely to carry her through the story of her wrongs, but to bear her up in what she knew to be the unavoidable result, his appeal to her to throw her past life to the winds, and entrust him with her future. She dare not trust herself to see him again; she must hurry away from that place, within the next few hours, in the early morning, and leave what she had to say to him in a note which would be given to Miss Cave. What should she say in that note? Tell him the real state of the case, and appeal to his sense of honour, to his feeling of pity, not to attempt to follow her? That would never do. Madge Pierrepont's experience of the world was not large, but it was sufficient to tell her that when a man, and especially a young man, is madly in love, appeals to such sentiments are generally made in vain. Such a confession would probably act as a provocative to his pursuit, and that must be stopped at any cost. Seeing Gerald under such circumstances as those, Madge would not have answered for herself, and all the mental anguish which she had undergone, and the triumph which she had obtained, would have been in vain.

After reflection, then, she came to the conclusion that there was but one way by which the end she sought for was to be obtained.

And that way was to strike his kind and trusting heart a blow which, coming from her hand, would numb and paralyse its action, and prevent its ever again throbbing in response to hers. She must "be cruel only to be kind," and must be content to pass as cold and heartless in Gerald's eyes rather than let him know her for what she really was. Knowing Gerald as Madge did, she never doubted for an instant that he would refuse to take from her lips any denial which was dictated by prudence or policy, and that the only method by which he could be restrained from further pursuit would be by touching

his pride. That must be done, no matter at what cost to herself; wittingly and knowingly she must degrade herself in the sight of the man who so loved her, and had just asked permission to dedicate his life to her.

So she sat down to do it. There, spread out before her, lay the paper which was to have borne his summons to her side, whereon was to have been written her acceptance of his offer. She thought of all this, and the pen which she had taken up dropped again from her fingers. Ah, surely the task was too cruel, the self-imposed burden too heavy for her to bear! Was it not too much to expect that she should not merely continue in the strait and thorny path, closing her eyes to the temptations of the lovely gardens stretching on either side of her, but that she should be called upon to wound and outrage him who offered to share that paradise with her? She could not do it—she could not do it! And Madge hid her face in her hands, and the bitter tears burst forth again. When the paroxysm was over, she rose and bathed her face, and once more returned to the table. Then, stopping for some time to try and get more command over her trembling fingers, to try and still the audible beating of her heart, to try and find words in which her meaning might be, with as little harshness as possible, expressed, she wrote the following letter:

MY DEAR GERALD,—If you have ever had any kind feeling for me, and I know you have, Gerald, you will need to remember it all when you read this. What I write now I ought to have said to you last night, if not before. No, not before, for up till last night I had only looked upon what you have said to me from time to time as so much boyish nonsense, not to be thought of seriously by either of us. I know that most boys—don't be offended, Gerald, there will come a time when you will consider youth a thing not to be ashamed of—that most boys admire women older than themselves, and there was a greater reason for your liking me, as we have been thrown so much together, and there are not many people—in the company, at least, I mean—with whom you seem to have much in common. I have always, as you will remember, Gerald, endeavoured to stop you when you were going to say anything definite to me, I have always refused to give you any definite answer, on the plea that it would be sufficient to ask me for one when

you were in a position to speak seriously to me. Last night you told me that time had now arrived, and it is my duty therefore to speak definitely to you.

Gerald, I cannot be your wife! I must not even be to you what I have been, a chosen companion, a woman in whose society you have been happy! In saying this I am not hard nor worldly. I have no doubt of your success in life, and I know that, should you continue to think as you do at present, your pleasure in that success would be doubled if it were shared by me. Should you continue to think? Ah! that is one point, Gerald! You have not seen enough of the world to know your own mind, and the woman whom you worship now might seem very homely and very dull to you in a few years' time!

But my chief reason for writing to you is to tell you that I am no longer free, that I have for some time been engaged to be married to a gentleman who now claims my promise. I ought to have told you this last night, Gerald, but I was overcome by the extra fatigue which I had undergone during the past week, and my dread of the annoyance which I knew my answer would give you was too much for me, so I write it to you instead! You must try and not think very badly of me for not telling you before. I had my reasons, reasons which I cannot explain now, but may be able to do so some day. I am going away from this at once, and am to be married very shortly. Good-bye, Gerald! God bless you! Most likely we shall never meet again, but I shall always think gratefully of the kindness that you have shown to me, and pray for your welfare. Once more, good-bye!

Yours sincerely,

MARGARET PIERREPOINT.

It was finished at last, after many alterations and much delay. As Madge read it over she said to herself, "This is doing evil that good may come of it, may God forgive me this bitter, bitter lie." Then she folded the letter, addressed it, shut it in her blotting-book, and went into Rose's bedroom.

The sun had risen by this time and was pouring in through the thin white curtains. Madge stepped softly up to the bed, and could not help noticing Rose's delicate beauty as she lay with her face upturned and her head resting on one of her arms.

"Too delicate and too sensitive to do much in the great battle of life," said Madge, as she bent over her. "Poor little

flower, it's lucky she has me to stand between her and the rough wind outside. Smiling in her sleep, too," she added, after a moment's pause; "it seems a shame to rouse her from a pleasant dream to the dull realities of packing and departure, but the time grows short, and we have much to do."

Then she touched her sister lightly on the shoulder, and the girl awoke and sat up in bed, looking before her with large eyes full of surprise.

"What is it, Madge?" she cried. "What has made you awake so early? I am generally up long before you; and your eyelids are all red and swollen too. I don't believe you have been to bed all night. What is the matter?"

"No, dear," said the elder sister, quietly, "there is nothing the matter, only you must get up at once and pack your own things, and help me to pack mine; we are going away."

"Going away!" repeated Rose. "When?"

"Now directly, by the seven o'clock train. We have scarcely time for our packing and our breakfast."

"But where are we going to, Madge, and why?"

"I don't know yet, dear, where, though probably we shall stop first at Springside, and as for why, Rose, the answer is, because I wish it."

Then Rose, who knew that when her sister was in what she was pleased to call "one of those tempers" there was no gain-saying her, promised to get up immediately, and Madge returned to her room, and began emptying her chest of drawers of its contents.

As she was in the midst of her packing, Miss Cave, who had been roused by the dragging about of the boxes, came in full of wonder and surprise at all she saw and heard. For Madge told the old lady a long story about her being not merely much fatigued, but more seriously out of health than she had imagined, adding, that Doctor Kent, whom she had consulted, had recommended her to try the mineral waters at Springside, and that she was about to proceed there with that object.

It was a great blow to Miss Cave to lose sight of her favourite, even for, as she imagined, a very short period, as she had fully calculated on their being together at Avonmouth. However, as the old lady remarked, an extra pound a week and half a clear benefit were good things in their way, but not to be compared to health, and

Doctor Kent's opinion should be followed to the letter.

The packing was completed, the preparations for departure were all made, and they were standing on the platform just before the train started, when Madge handed to Miss Cave a letter, and requested that it might be sent round to Mr. Hardinge's lodging. Her hand did not tremble in the slightest degree, nor was there in her face, which was closely scanned by the old lady, a trace of any unusual expression. Once resolved that the sacrifice was due from her, Madge went to the stake not merely with courage but with dignity.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

"TOM OF TEN THOUSAND."

JOSCELINE, the eleventh Earl of Northumberland, who died in 1670, at Turin, at an early age, left an only daughter. This little heiress of half Northumberland, in 1679, when only thirteen, was nominally married to Henry Cavendish, Earl of Ogle, and son of the second Duke of Newcastle. A year only after the death of the Earl of Ogle, the child-widow, much to the anger of her proud relatives, was married to Thomas Thynne, Esquire, of Longleat, in Wiltshire. This wealthy country gentleman, generally known as "Tom of Ten Thousand" (the rich Issachar of Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*), was a sworn friend and ally of the young Duke of Monmouth, who had advanced his suit, and won over the intriguing grandmother, who guarded the heiress, by eulogies of Thynne's vast estates and great rent-roll. The Cavendishes had also given him a helping hand; the prize sighed for by all the needy bachelor nobles of the corrupt court was Tom's now, and lucky Tom's only. The Whig party was delighted at the matrimonial triumph of one of their side, one especially who, on presenting a factious petition from Wiltshire, had been personally rated by the angry king for encouraging the people to mutiny and rebellion. The girlish bride being even now not yet fifteen, her mother agreed, with the consent of her husband, to send her for a year to the Continent.

This natural delay of the union seems to have roused fresh hopes in the minds of some of the former lovers of the little heiress. In one especially it kindled thoughts that were not only revengeful, but murderous. A certain Count Charles John Königsmark, a young Swedish nobleman, aged twenty-three, descended from

one of Gustavus's generals, had seen the child-widow in the spring of 1681. He had fallen in love either with her or her money-box, had proposed, and had been rejected. This young Swede had distinguished himself at several courts by his chivalrous gallantry, courage, and accomplishments. He had fought with the Knights of Malta against the Turkish galleys. The Countess d'Annoy saw him venture his life against a ferocious wild bull in the Plaza Mayor, at Madrid, in 1677. In 1681, he came for the second time to England, then posted fast through Spain to help our Tangier garrison against the Moors, and joined with great courage in some desperate and successful sallies. Having made a cruise against the Algerine pirates, in January, 1682, he returned secretly to England, his hot brain bent on some plot against his victorious rival, Tom of Ten Thousand, that might at any risk secure him the heiress snatched from him. The count's brother, Philip Christopher Königsmark, was at this time a young Oxford undergraduate, learning riding at the academy of M. Foubert, at the upper end of the Haymarket (afterwards at Foubert's place, Regent-street). On the 2nd of February, 1682, the elder Königsmark arrived in London, and assuming a false name, hid himself in obscure lodgings at the corner of the Haymarket; but this proving too public a thoroughfare, he left the broad street of the country hay waggons, and took a fresh lodging at the corner of Rupert-street, further eastward; but there the chimney smoked, and quitting that retreat in three days, he went to rooms in St. Martin's-lane. No flowing blonde Chedreux periwig fragrant with *maréchal* powder, no lace cravat blowing in the wind, no coat of rose-coloured velvet, no handkerchief exquisitely scented with *eau-de-Portugal*, no laughing evenings at Spring Gardens, no riding in the ring or risting of foils at a French fencing-school, but all day he lay down on his bed in night-gown and night-cap, and sipped physic for an eruption he had caught from overheating himself in riding that mad race through Spain, eager to get to work among the Tangerine Moors. His excuse to those about him was that he wished to remain private till his coach could be got ready, and he could appear as a man of quality should. Immediately on arriving in England, the count had written a letter, signing himself "Carlo Cusk," to Mr. Hanson, his brother's tutor. In 1681,

on the previous visit of the count to England, the count had told Hanson that he had heard that Esquire Thynne had used some abusive language about him and his house, and he wanted Hanson to ask the Swedish envoy what the consequences would be if he called Mr. Thynne to an account and gained the advantage. Would such an event mar any hopes or pretensions he might have to the hand of "my Lady Ogle?" The old ambition—we can scarcely call it love—was still working in his mind. The envoy's answer was, that if the count meddled with Mr. Thynne, "he would have no good living in England," and as to the legal consequences of the meddling he would inquire. Upon Friday (February the 10th), a Polish groom, named Borosky, for whose arrival the count had been for many days extremely anxious, came to Foubert's riding academy, where Hanson and the count's young brother lodged, to ask where the count's lodgings were. Hanson took the Pole apart, and after half an hour's mysterious conversation, sent back the Pole and the man who guided him from the Cross Keys in Throgmorton-street, telling the man to bring the Pole again on the morrow, as "he must despatch him about his business," and a terrible business it presently proved, as we shall soon see. The Pole came the next day, bringing a sea-bed and a portmanteau, a gun with a wheel lock, and some other things, and, not liking to take these things to the count's lodgings, he went to a tavern, called for a pot of ale, and left his luggage there. On the Saturday, a little before noon, Mr. Hanson, who hung about the count and made himself generally useful, took "the Polander" to the count, who asked him where he had been all that while. The Pole replied he had been at sea, tossed up and down, for it had been stormy, and he had like to have been cast away. The count then said to the faithful Hanson, that the fellow was all naked, and he had no means to send to buy him a riding-coat, a broad hint which Hanson at once took. After dining he went to a shop near the Haymarket, bought a riding-coat for the Pole, and took it to the count. Königsmark then said his man had never a sword. Hanson asked how much his lordship would please to bestow upon a weapon. The count replied, "A matter of ten shillings or thereabouts." Hanson did not see his way clear to such a sword, but at last undertook the commission, and went to St. Martin's-lane sword-hunting, still could not find a blade.

worth a groat. Then he walked to Charing-cross, and there ordered a servant's sword. "I leave it to your discretion," he said to the cutler. "Use my friend well, and use yourself favourably." Hanson was to come back for it after he had been to the play with young Count Königsmark. When Hanson called for it, he was angry to find it not ready, and said "it was strange a gentleman could not get a little sword ready for him in a whole afternoon." That same Saturday Doctor Harder, a German surgeon, took the Pole to his lodgings, and sent him to the house where Captain Vratz, one of the count's retinue, lived. On the Sunday morning the Pole, who had slept at the count's lodgings in St. Martin's-lane, received the sword by a porter from Mr. Hanson, and in the forenoon went away with a buff coat on, and over that a campaign coat, a pair of jack-boots under his arm, and the strong basket-hilted broadsword, ready for active service of any kind, by his side. According to the count's story, there being no chance of war, or of England and Holland uniting against France, he had at once handed over the Polish groom who had arrived from Hamburg to Captain Vratz.

On that same Sunday morning the count asked his page, a boy of fifteen, the son of a porter, whom he had hired for sixpence a day, whether people were suffered to ride about London streets on Sundays, and the boy told him that they might before and after sermon. Now, as the count, a man of fashion, and above such considerations, had often ridden out on Sundays in Hyde Park, the question, to say the least, seemed uncalled for. The count, nevertheless, appeared pleased at the answer. That same day Captain Vratz, with no apparent reason, changed his lodgings from King-street, Westminster, to Doctor Harder's, in Leicester Fields. In the evening, he, the Polander, and another of the count's retainers, named Stern, a lieutenant, met at the Black Bull in Holborn—the Polander armed with a blunderbuss, the other two with swords and pistols—and thence sallied forth. They inquired their way to Temple Bar that quiet Sunday evening, about six P.M., and rode up the Strand towards St. James's.

That same evening, at a quarter after eight, Mr. Thynne's great gilt coach came rolling along Pall Mall from St. James's-street, where he had been calling on the old intriguing Lady Northumberland. It swept round the corner by the brick gateway of

the palace, past Nell Gwynn's house, now the office of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and bore down towards Charing-cross. Footmen with Thynne's livery swung behind it, and a footman ran before with a flambeau. At the lower end of St. Alban's-street (the present turning to Waterloo-place), three horsemen rode past the coach, then turned; one of them called, "Stop, you dog!" to the coachman; and another at once fired a blunderbuss straight into the coach. The running footman with the flambeau, looking back, saw a cloud of smoke, and heard his master call out, "I am murdered." The three horsemen instantly dashed off up the Haymarket. The footman followed, shouting "Murder!" but at last exhausted, gave up the chase, and returned to find his master dying. Four bullets had entered Mr. Thynne's body; two of them had lodged in the spine. The wounded man lingered till six the next morning, then expired in the presence of the Duke of Monmouth and other friends who had watched all night by his bedside. Lord Mordaunt and several Whig gentlemen, who thought their lives were in danger from Popish plotters, searched all night for the murderers. Sir John Reresby (the memoir writer) was active in the hue and cry. At last a sedan chairman was found who deposed that he had secretly brought Captain Vratz on the Sunday from his King-street lodgings to the Black Bull in Holborn, where he took horse. They also found a Swedish servant of Vratz's, who had been sent to watch for Mr. Thynne's coach, and had seen the three murderers boot, mount, and start to intercept it. At six in the morning, Reresby and Lord Mordaunt found Captain Vratz in bed at the house of the German doctor in Leicester Fields, his sword at some distance from him on the table. He made no resistance, and seemed quite unconcerned.

In the mean time, the Duke of Monmouth, Lord Cavendish, and others of Thynne's friends continued an incessant search for Königsmark, who had fled in disguise. The advertisement issued described the count as, "Age about twenty-five or twenty-six years (he was only twenty-three), of a low stature, pretty full set, fair long hair, but sometimes wears a periwig, a round face, with a few pock-holes in it," and offering two hundred pounds reward. At a quarter to nine o'clock on the night of the murder, Vratz came to Königsmark, and stayed with him

for some time. A little after seven A.M. the next day the page came to Königsmark's room and found him up, and being asked by his master what the hubbub he heard in the street was about, the boy told him that some were taken who had killed Esquire Thynne. The count then asked when he was murdered, and what sort of a man he was. The boy replied, "He heard he was a man of great estate, and well beloved; and that the Duke of Monmouth had been in the coach but a little while before, and had been killed too had he not alighted before the murder." The count made no reply; but at half-past eight the page's father, a porter, was sent with two "portmantles" to Charing-cross for the Windsor coach. That same evening the count, disguised in a black periwig and in a light-coloured suit, with gold buttons, came to the house of a Swede at Rotherhithe, with whom he remained closely shut up till the Thursday. He left dressed in a black suit and velvet cap, which he borrowed of the Swede. A boatman took him down to Deptford, the next day he went to Greenwich, and the day after to Gravesend, pretending to be a foreign jewel merchant in trouble, and paying the boatmen five shillings a day.

Two officers of the Duke of Monmouth, getting on his track, and hearing that he would embark in a vessel on the following Monday, came to Gravesend about nine o'clock on Sunday evening. One of the men jostled the count first, as he came on shore, to see what was under his campaign coat, and kept close to him as he called to the watermen who were stowing the boat to come away. As the first man caught him and held him hard, the count cried, "What, do you come to rob me?" The man replied, "My lord, you are my prisoner. I am the king's messenger, and have waited several days for you." The other man then came up, and said, "Your lordship shall not want for anything that is convenient." He inquired whether they knew him. On their telling him that he was Count Königsmark, he replied, "That is my name; I do not deny it." But when the name was pronounced he gave a slight start, dropped his sword, and a black periwig and cap fell off his head. He was then taken up the street to the Custom House, and searched for arms by the Custom House officers, before the mayor. The crowd being rude, he desired to be well used. The next day the deputy-governor sent a file of musketeers to guard the count to Whitehall, to be examined before the king and

council. Before he left Gravesend, he asked if Captain Vratz had confessed anything, and he said he believed he would not confess anything. When one of the king's messengers told him that, had not Providence ordered it otherwise, the count might have killed his particular friend and master whom he had served many years, Königsmark replied, "I don't think they would have done the Duke of Monmouth any injury," and seemed very sorry at that suspicion. He then walked up and down awhile, and presently said, "'Tis a stain upon my blood, but one good action in the wars, or a lodging upon a counter-scarp, will wash away all that." The mayor was in the room at the time. On being, however, told that the Polander had confessed, "and wept mightily," the count for the first time seemed much disturbed, bit his clothes, and desired to lie down. On the Monday, the fashionable murderer was brought before an extraordinary council. Sir John Reresby, who was present, says that Königsmark, who was a fine man, with the longest hair he had ever seen, displayed all the assurance imaginable. He said he had fled by the advice of a friend, who feared the mob would suspect him of having committed so black a deed, because an intimate of his had been mixed up with it. Being at the king's "couchee" the night after, Reresby perceived by his majesty's discourse that he was willing the count should get off. Cromwell would have acted differently, but vice and self-indulgence had corrupted Charles the Second's heart, and party feeling had warped his naturally good judgment. It was, after all, only Tom of Ten Thousand, one of the Monmouth set, and no great loss to the court party.

On Friday, Borosky, the Pole, and the Swedish lieutenant, Stern, both confessed to their share in the murder. Borosky had been for some time in the count's service, and had been sent for to groom in the German manner English horses, bought by the count on the rumour of a war between England and France. On Saturday, the 11th, the captain told him that he had had a quarrel with an English gentleman, who had set six persons upon him in the road, in which conflict he was wounded, and two of the assailants killed. Therefore, since the said Mr. Thynne had attempted to kill him, he would make an end of it. On the Sunday the count gave him a sword, and told him to do whatever the captain ordered, which was plainly equivalent to

sanctioning, if not openly commanding, the murder. About noon the captain handed him a musketoon, a case of pistols, and a pocket-pistol. Vratz then said to the unhesitating vassal, and repeated it five or six times, "When we go out together, if I stop a coach, do you fire into it, and then follow me."

The lieutenant said that in October he was lodging near the Royal Exchange, at the City of Amsterdam, a Dutch ordinary. There he had met Vratz, a fellow-lodger, and had entered into his service, consenting to be his second in a duel. Vratz said to Stern that if he could get one who would kill a gentleman he would give him two hundred, nay, three hundred dollars. He afterwards gave him money to buy a musketoon. After a short absence in France, Vratz talked to Stern of Thynne. "I must see now," he said, "how to order it that I may come at him, if I could but get some stout fellows. Do you know no Frenchman about town, or an Italian, who might despatch him?" Vratz then bought four brace of pistols and two long swords, and said, "Now he is a dead man!" He then begged Stern to get two poniards made, and drew the shape he required. Vratz wanted to engage more men in the business, but Stern objected to so many persons, and said, "Three horsemen are enough; you will have use for no more." After that Captain Vratz purchased three horses, accepting the lieutenant's economical proposition. "I must have the rogue now," said Vratz, as he patted the flanks of the three horses. The Sunday the Polander came he told Stern, "Now I have a brave fellow," and, after a private conversation with the storm-tossed Polander, exclaimed, exultingly, "This is a brave fellow, indeed, for he says those that will not fight must be killed." The same Sunday of the murder Vratz and Stern loaded the musketoon together. The captain, eager for blood, bid him charge the piece with fifteen bullets, but Stern replied "that that would kill the footmen and every one about the coach." "It matters not for that," said Vratz. Still Stern persisted, and put in the barrel only five or six bullets, some iron wrapped up in rags rubbed with rosin, so that the wadding should burn. The captain told the Polander that if the Duke of Monmouth were with Mr. Thynne, nothing should be done. One day when Stern sat by himself, melancholy, the captain came in and asked him how he ailed. Stern replied he had had a disagreeable and unlucky dream; he had

dreamed that four dogs flew at him; two were chained, but the others seized him. Upon this the captain seemed concerned, but presently plucked out a tempting letter, signed Königsmark, giving the captain full power to present him with a captain-lieutenant's place in his regiment; below this were the figures of six thousand (rix-dollars) in German.

The four prisoners were tried at the Old Bailey on the 27th of February. Vratz, the dark, imperturbable captain; Stern, the repentant lieutenant; Borosky, the slavish executor of his master's cruel wish; and Charles John, Count Königsmark, as an accessory before the fact. The three judges who presided, all bent on dragging the young Swedish murderer out of the fire to please the king, were Sir Francis Pemberton, Chief Justice of the King's Bench; Sir Francis North, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; and Sir William Montagu, Chief Baron of the Exchequer. Pemberton, who had learnt law while in jail for debt, was a bold, self-confident, artful man; North, a little, sharp, dexterous partisan, Tory to the extreme; and Montagu, a creature of the court, afterwards displaced by James for not going far enough in advancing despotism. Vratz's defence was, that having challenged Thynne for insulting expressions used by him respecting his master a year before at Richmond, he had sent him a challenge, which had never been acknowledged. He therefore resolved to stop his carriage, and compel him to fight. The Polander was only told to act in case Mr. Thynne's men surrounded him (the captain), or pursued him to knock him on the head, but, mistaking his orders, he fired. The count denied all privy with the revenge taken by his servants to defend his honour. The Polander had been sent for four months before, after the siege of Strasbourg, when war seemed imminent. He himself had only fled because Mr. Hanson, his brother's travelling tutor, had sent to tell him that the Duke of Monmouth and several noblemen had been to Foubert's looking for him, and his tailor assured him the common people named him as concerned in the murder, and would tear him in pieces. He had only taken ten or eleven pounds with him, and that did not look like much preparation for flight. What he meant by the suspicious remark about the stain on his blood was, that being imprisoned would be a greater disgrace to him than even murder itself, it not being the custom in his country to take persons

of quality prisoners in that manner. Then, to rouse the Protestant sympathies of those days, the count, through his interpreter, said that he was a Protestant, as his forefathers had been. "They, under Gustavus Adolphus, were soldiers, and died with their swords in their hands, endeavouring to settle the Protestant religion in Germany, and protect it there; and there had never anything been done by his family but for the honour of his country and his religion;" and he said "that if any of his former actions could give any the least suspicion of his being guilty of this or any foul act, he was very willing to lay down his life immediately. He was ready on all occasions to serve the King of England, and he loved the English nation well, and was always eager to serve them. Without any interest in the world, and against the will of his relations, he had brought his brother to England to be educated in the Protestant religion, to show his inclination to the English nation."

Sir Francis Winnington, who conducted the prosecution, dwelt much on Vratz going straight to the count, his patron, recking hot with Mr. Thynne's blood, and within an hour of the murder, and also on the count's pretended ignorance of the murder, as shown in his conversation with his boy. His disguises and his flight were also pointed out in detail. The jury retired for half an hour, then found Borosky, Vratz, and Stern guilty, and acquitted the wild young gallant who had notoriously given the order to kill poor Tom of Ten Thousand. Afterwards, in the calmer and juster days of William the Third, Sir John Hawles, the Solicitor-General, pronounced the trial illegal, because the Chief Justice had never asked the lieutenant and Polander what they had to say for themselves, the court being unwilling that they should openly accuse their master, the count; for the same reason not permitting the justice of the peace to read the examinations of Stern and Borosky. There was no doubt that the principals should have been tried first, and the count afterwards on their evidence; but the king and court had from the first been resolutely bent on Königsmark's escape, the more especially that the Monmouth faction were eager for the death of the murderer of Thynne.

Doctor Burnet (the historian whom Swift hated so bitterly), and Doctor Horneck, the excellent minister of the German chapel in the Savoy, had many interviews with the three condemned men. The

Polander, a poor ignorant boor, slavishly obedient to his master, and guilty of no previous crimes, was free and ingenuous in his confession, and expressed great sorrow for what he had done. He said that when the count first made that proposition to him, at one o'clock on the Sunday, he was troubled at it, and went into another room and kneeled down and said the Lord's Prayer, but concluded that since his mind was not fortified against the crime by that prayer, that God had appointed that he should do it. He said that in his own country he had been bred up in such an opinion of the duty he owed his master, and such an obligation to maintain his honour, that hearing of the attempt to assassinate his master, he thought himself in some sort absolved if he should revenge such an attempt. He was also deluded by the captain telling him that if they happened to be taken, he (the captain) would suffer for it. A day or two after his imprisonment, the vision of a woman (seen by him before in Germany on extraordinary occasions) had appeared to him, and he believed it was sent from God to touch his heart. He felt an assurance of God's mercy, and longed for death more than ever he did for anything in his life, and from his heart he forgave the captain and lieutenant, and prayed earnestly for them.

Stern, too, was equally penitent. He was a thoughtful and naturally well-intentioned man, the illegitimate son of a Swedish count, and had fought for twenty years in the great German wars. He was proud of the courage he had shown, and stood much on points of honour. Being poor and out of employment, he had come to England to try and get into the Guards. He had gone out determined to fight if occasion required, but to do nothing else. But as for Vratz, he remained stern and obdurate from the beginning. He would confess nothing, but that the Polander had overshot his orders. He sneered and swore at Stern as a poor pitiful scoundrel, who had told lies about imaginary bribes and promises, and who had been decoyed into a false confession by promises of a decent funeral. Moreover, he taunted the English divines, who, though opposed to auricular confession, yet pressed him to make declarations of things they had a mind he should say, though they were false. He would never utter the falsehood that the count had been the contriver of the murder. He was resolved to confess no more than he had done publicly before the council.

He feared no hell, and he trusted in Christ's mercy. "It was enough for him," said this proud soldier, "to be humble to God, but he knew of no humility he owed to man; God, he believed, had a greater favour for gentlemen than to require all those punctilios at their hands, and said it was absurd to think that so many thousand gentlemen abroad in the world, that stood upon their honour and reputation as much as he, should be damned, or for ever made miserable, because they could not stoop to things which would prejudice and spoil the figure they made." This unbending man had not long before commanded a desperate forlorn hope at the siege of Mons, when only three out of fifty-eight men escaped with life, and for this service the Prince of Orange had made him a lieutenant of the Guards, and the King of Sweden had given him a troop of horse. A little before his death he grew gentler to the lieutenant, but otherwise he remained hard as a flint, and nearly his last words were that he did not care a rush for death, and that he hoped and believed "God would deal with him as with a gentleman." His last wish was to ride to the gallows in a coach and not in a cart. Stern particularly begged his head might be cut off, as being hung was unlike a gentleman. He wrote a long harangue, divided into twenty-five heads, exhorting all professions and trades to good works and to repentance. The morning of his execution he and the Polander sang the Fifty-first Psalm in High Dutch three times, dwelling particularly on the verse, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation."

Vratz continued silent and firm to the last. The gibbets were erected at the foot of St. Alban's-street, in Pall Mall, on the very spot where the murder had taken place. Burnet had warned Vratz not to be a "faux brave," so directly Burnet came up to the cart Vratz smiled, and said to him, "You shall see that it is not a false bravery, but that I am fearless to the last." He said he was now to be received into heaven, and that his sins were forgiven him. To use Burnet's own words: "I observed he had some touches in his mind when I offered up that petition, that for the sake of the blood of Christ the innocent blood shed in that place might be forgiven, and that the cry of the one for mercy might prevail over the other for justice. At these words he looked up to heaven with the greatest sense that I had at any time observed in him." Seeing Sir John

Reresby, the justice who had first examined him, in a coach near the gibbet, the captain bowed to him and to several other persons whom he knew, resting his eye very often upon the Duke of Monmouth, who stood in an adjoining balcony. He continued in an undaunted manner for a quarter of an hour with the rope round his neck, looking up to heaven and round about on the spectators. He refused to have his face covered like the others. As for Stern, he was deeply penitent, but he did not change colour nor show any fear. When the three were asked when they would give the signal for being turned off, they answered they were ready, and that the cart might be driven away when the sheriff pleased to order it. In a little while after it drove off. The corpse of Vratz was embalmed, and, by permission of the king, was sent to his Swedish friends, "he being of good family." As for that poor, stolid, faithful henchman, the Polander, his carcass was hung in chains (not to come between the wind and our nobility) on the roadside between Mile-end and Bow. The count, as soon as he had paid his Newgate fees, made straight for France, and went careering on along the primrose path to an early death. No one seems to have thought the worse of him for the murder, and Louis Quatorze at once gave him the Furstemberg regiment to command. Eager for pleasure and excitement at any cost, he was wounded at the siege of Cambray in 1683, and afterwards figured at the siege of Gerona, in Catalonia. In 1686 he accompanied his uncle to Greece, and fought against the Turks at Navarino, Athens, and Modon. At Athens he distinguished himself by blowing up the Parthenon, where the Turks had stored powder. He fell at last in a desperate sally at Argos, only surviving his victim and rival four years. His brother, the young gallant at M. Foubert's riding academy, came to a more miserable end twelve years after the murder. As he was secretly retiring from a farewell visit to Sophia of Zell, the young and beautiful wife of the Elector of Hanover, afterwards George the First, who had shared his guilty passion, he was set upon by halberdiers, cloven down, and buried at once under the floor of the passage of the palace where he had fallen dead. His skeleton has since been found there, and some letters of the electress, still preserved at Upsal, have established her guilt. The unhappy woman remained thirty-two years a

prisoner immured in the castle of Ahlden—a fortress on the little river Aller. Aurora, one of the murdered man's sisters, became mistress of the Elector of Saxony, and mother of the celebrated Marshal Saxe.

The child-widow, in the May of the year of Mr. Thynne's death, married the proud Duke of Somerset. Singularly enough, the duke himself had obtained his title by the murder of his elder brother, who had been shot in a fray near Genoa. The marriage proved an unhappy one. The duke turned out the Godolphin ministry, but refused to join their Tory successors. His wife became a special and firm favourite of the queen, and it was the duchess's resentment of a cruel and ribald attack of Swift's that prevented Swift ever obtaining the great aim of his selfish life—a bishopric.

Poor murdered Tom of Ten Thousand lies buried at the west end of the south aisle of Westminster Abbey, among good and wise men, who had no voice to resent the intrusion of a silly and worthless rake, and under a grand dusty marble monument, erected at the cost of his executor, John Hale, Esquire, of Bradford, Wiltshire. At the base of the monument is a clumsy relieve representing Borosky firing the blunderbuss, Vratz stopping the coach, and Stern watching the assassination. A long Latin inscription, openly denouncing Königsmark, was written for this tomb, but poor servile Sprat, the dean, was too courtly to allow it to be used. As Tom of Ten Thousand left no children, Sir Thomas Thynne, a cousin, succeeded to the beautiful Wiltshire estate of Longleat, and all the money, and from him the present Marquis of Bath is descended.

THE GLOVE.

From morning time to night time,
Dark time and bright time,
I haunt the pleasant places
My love hath rendered sweet.
Down by wood and meadow,
In the sun and shadow,
I follow the sweet traces
Of fairy hands and feet.

Though I love her dearly,
We are neighbours merely,
She boweth to me daily,
In a distant way;
Then while I am staring,
Dead to my despairing,
Trippeth past me gaily,
Smiling on her way.

In the woodland shady
Walks my little lady,
And botanises under
The pines that sigh above.

There in sweet green places
I follow in her traces,
And one glad morn, O wonder!
I found a little glove.

So tiny, so tender,
So silken, so slender,
Still moist and warm and scented,
From fingers warm and white,
I found it softly blowing,
Where ferns and flowers were growing,
And like a man demented
I seized it in delight.

And while the warmth within it
Grew fainter every minute,
"I love her! how I love her!"
I cried with burning eyes.
"O sweet as rose-scent lingers,
The touch of rosebud fingers!"
I sighed, and ten times over
I kissed my little prize.

Then thought I with glad laughter,
"Shall I now follow after,
And find my love and give her
Her own, and look my love?"
But as I questioned duly,
My heart leapt up unruly,
My lips began to quiver,
I could not lose the glove.

No! let me keep and kiss it,
Her white hand will not miss it,
And tears of gladness wet it,
As still I stooped to kiss.
And all my bosom yearning
To touch it, on my burning
Heart of hearts I set it,
And thrilled with sudden bliss.

From morning time to night time,
Dark time and bright time,
I kept it thrilling through me,
In guilty sweet delight.
All day its sweet touch fired me,
All day the joy inspired me,
Sleeping I held it to me,
And dreamed of it all night.

Three days my bliss possessed me,
Three days and nights it blessed me,
And on the fourth mad morning
I wandered o'er the grass.
And as I viewed with rapture
The sweet spot of the capture,
Suddenly with no warning
I saw my true love pass.

With distant bow and stately,
She would have passed sedately,
When red as fire advancing
I held the prize of love;
And while my low voice muttered
Wild wandering words, she fluttered,
Blushing and brightly glancing,
And took the little glove.

Then she with self-possession,
Blind to my eyes' confession,
Said "Thank you, sir," and pondered,
A moment, adding low,
"My aunt, who lost it lately,
Will also thank you greatly,
She missed it while we wandered
A day or two ago."

Her aunt? That maiden lady,
So prim, and stiff, and shady!
I gasped, by fate perfidious,
Cast out of fairy-land.

While from my side repairing,
My little love tript, bearing
The worthless, wretched, hideous
Old glove in her white hand.

AN ITALIAN PEASANT PLAY.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

ALL the world has heard or read of the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau, in the Bavarian highlands. The present writer witnessed, in eighteen hundred and sixty-eight, the performance of a Passion Play at Brixlegg,* in the Tyrol, which was precisely similar in manner and matter to that of Ammergau, and differed from it only in dimensions, being on a smaller scale as regards the number of spectators and performers engaged in it. The spectacle was a very impressive and curious one, and the remembrance of it was so vivid in our minds, that we resolved, in spite of some obstacles in the way, to make an effort to see a performance which we supposed would be in some degree analogous to that of Brixlegg, and which took place in Italy last year.

The pretty watering-place of the Bagni di Lucca, standing amidst chestnut woods, and on the edge of a river full of rapid sparkling water, is well known to foreign tourists. Less well known is the city of Lucca, about fourteen English miles from the Bagni, with its quaint cathedral, and other picturesque ecclesiastical edifices. And probably the village of Pon San Pieri (contraction of Ponte a San Pietro, or, as we should say, St. Petersbridge), although close to the latter city, is not known at all save to inhabitants of the district. This latter place, however, was our destination when we started from Florence by a very early train on the morning of the 22nd of May.

A few preliminary words must be said in explanation of the nature of the spectacle promised us. From time immemorial the peasants in the Lucchese province have been in the habit of giving an annual series of performances, the subjects of which are mostly taken from Scripture, or from the Lives of the Saints. These performances are termed "Maggi," literally Mays. They are given on each successive Sunday during the month of May, and very often they extend into June. It is not clear why the month of May should be especially chosen for them. May is, as is well known, the month dedicated to the Madonna by the

Roman Catholic Church. In this month, too, were celebrated many festivals of heathen antiquity; and traces of the worship of the old gods linger with tenacious vitality throughout the length and breadth of this classic land. In any case the Maggio is doubtless a lineal descendant of the Mystery, or Miracle Play.

If it suffice to constitute a "religious drama" that the subject of it should be taken from the Bible, or from the legendary adventures of some holy personage, then the Lucchese Maggio is a religious drama. Some few exceptions there are to this rule, inasmuch as the *Gerusalemme Liberata* of Tasso, and the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto, have both furnished subjects for Maggi. But in the former case the argument of the play is confined to the adventures of the Christians Olinto and Clorinda; and, moreover, the expedition of the "Gran Capitano," who freed the Holy Sepulchre from Paynim power, is in itself a religious subject, or may be treated as such.

Of the *Orlando Furioso* certainly so much cannot be said. The title of a Maggio taken from it runs thus: *The Fury of Orlando; or, Bradamante and Ruggiero*. But my own intimate belief is that the personages of that romantic poem are quite as authentic and venerable to the spectators who habitually attend a Maggio as are Santa Oliva, or Judith and King Ozias, who figure in other Maggi.

The actors are, without exception, peasants and tillers of the soil. The impresario is any enterprising individual who happens to have at his disposal a locale suitable for the purpose. The price of entrance to a native patron of the drama I believe to be from twopence to threepence. Whatsoever can be cleared over and above the expenses is divided amongst the actors. The same troupe travels from village to village (throughout the somewhat narrow limits of one district) to give its performances.

The 22nd of May was a very hot day; the sun poured down scorching rays from a cloudless sky, and the roads were carpeted with thick soft dust, which the least movement of foot, hoof, or wheel sent flying in suffocating clouds. The Maggio was to commence at eleven o'clock A.M. We left our inn, on the shady side of a quiet street in Lucca, very reluctant to venture forth into the pitilessly bright country. We seated ourselves in a jingling hackney-carriage, drawn by one of those swift, slight, uneducated looking horses so com-

* See *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*, First Series, vol. xx., p. 397.

monly seen in Italy, who rattled over the highway briskly enough. His driver was attired with dandified smartness. The occasion was one of unalloyed festivity to him, for he was to wait and carry us back to Lucca at the end of the performance, and thus would not only spend a few hours of perfect idleness, and see the Maggio, but would be well paid for doing so. Beside him on the box was perched our servant, a native Lucchese, whom we had brought with us as one cognisant of the ways of the place. The Lucchese have the reputation of making the best domestic servants in Italy, and enjoy a character for integrity which my experience leads me to think thoroughly well deserved. Our man was a member of a simple peasant family in the Lucchese; and not the least amusing part of the day's spectacle to me was to observe the condescending town mouse air with which he tolerated and apologised to us for the rusticity of the crowd, and the humbleness of the theatre. For had he not lived five years in Florence? And were not the glories of the Pergola known to him? And yet his genuine country-bred delight in the Maggio, familiar to him from boyhood, would crop up through the city varnish every now and then. And before the day was over he confided to me his notion that if Giuditte e Ieforne—so he pronounced Giuditte e Oloferne—could be represented in, say, the Teatro Principe Umberto (a new theatre rather bigger than Drury Lane!), it would make a fine effect.

We were set down at the entrance of a narrow passage in one of the few rambling stone houses that constitute the village of Pon San Pieri. Having gone through the passage we were conducted up a very steep ladder-like staircase which led at once into the theatre itself. The staircase creaked beneath our tread, and the gallery into which we were ushered creaked also, perilously as it seemed to me. However, the event proved that it was sufficiently solid for its temporary purpose.

The theatre had been at no distant date a large barn or granary. The walls were of rough stone. The roof was a complication of massive beams, with here and there a patch of tiling left bare to the inspection of the public. There was one gallery running round three sides of the oblong rectangular space. The floor was covered with closely-packed rows of rough wooden benches. A sort of hutch of unplanned deal boards formed the orchestra. The stage was hidden by an act-drop, the like of

which, I dare swear, few of my readers have ever beheld. It was of painted canvas, and so far resembled all other act-drops; but the picture limned upon it defies description. It appeared to consist of broad patches of boiled spinach, alternated with parallelograms of bath-brick. These, however, being interpreted, after some anxious study, proved to be grassy lawns and marble steps. The perspective was of the willow-pattern school. I do not think that the artist Pon San Pieri had ever heard of modern pre-Raphaelitism, so I conclude his peculiar "manner" to have been either derived direct from the Chinese model, or to have been an original inspiration leading him to the same remarkable results.

The whole place was packed with a dense crowd of peasants, and the heat and evil odours became almost insupportable before the day was out. They would indeed have become quite insupportable, but for the welcome fumigation afforded by a great deal of coarse tobacco, which was freely smoked in all parts of the house.

What a contrast, one could not help mentally exclaiming, to the Tyrolese audience of the Passion Play! The Tyrolese were mostly in their national costume; sombre and ungraceful enough in the case of the women, but decent, solid-looking, and suitable to the rank and habits of the wearer. Here, on the other hand, were exaggerated crinolines, lingering in Pon San Pieri long after the tide of fashion had swept them away from other spots, bright bows of ribbon, gaudy hats with impossible flowers stuck on them, and chignons—chignons that raised a shudder in any one of a speculative turn of mind who took to conjecturing how, and with what, those glossy, oily masses of hair were stuffed out to such preposterous dimensions. The great majority of the men took off their coats and jackets very early in the proceedings, and gave to view shirt-sleeves, which it must be said were mostly clean, and neckties of all colours of the rainbow. They were all poor people. The effort to be fine at a cheap rate was unpleasantly apparent. But also it must be noted that the combination of cheapness and finery appeared to have succeeded in fulfilling their aspirations. Every one looked contented and self-satisfied. There was none of the consciousness of being but tawdry and shabby when all was done, which would under similar circumstances have been apparent on English faces; and which would possibly have rendered them

sullen towards ourselves, who obviously belonged to a higher class. On the contrary, we were treated with perfectly good-humoured courtesy. And though they stared at us—as well they might, our apparition in their midst being certainly unexpected, and I am inclined to believe unprecedented—they were free from any intention of offence.

Their complacency, and utter absence of self-distrust, were moreover amusingly displayed in their condescending endeavours to explain to us the argument of the play; and in their inquiries, often repeated, if we had ever seen anything like that before, and how we liked it. I am convinced that they regarded us with much the same sort of curious observation as we should bestow on a respectable mandarin who should be taken for the first time to the opera at Her Majesty's Theatre.

The manager with his own official hands brought a couple of rush-bottomed chairs with clintz cushions for us to sit upon. And our neighbours right and left cheerfully made way on their hard wooden benches, to permit these seats to be lugged into the front row. This post of honour was one we by no means coveted, but it would have hurt the impresario's feelings to refuse it, so we submitted. He lamented that we had not forewarned him of our coming, and promised that if we would attend another performance, to be given on the 15th of June following, he would provide accommodation suitable for our "*rispettabilissimo persone*." Where he contemplated putting us in state I know not; unless perhaps in the wooden hutch that served for orchestra.

I may as well state at once that whose should have sought for a vestige of religious sentiment, or a spirit of veneration, in this Maggio, would have sought in vain. Author, actors, and spectators, were all equally devoid of the least approach to such feelings. In the intervals between the acts the noise of shouting, laughing, and opening bottles of fizzing Chiavenna beer, was incessant. And, indeed, during the performance there was a good deal of loud talking throughout all the less interesting portions of the play. The Maggio represented (Judith and Holofernes) was a well-known one. The audience were up in all the points, and bestowed their applause and attention exclusively upon these, disregarding the main action of the drama. This trait struck me very much; for I saw in it an instance of that spirit of conventionality in all artistic matters, which,

in my opinion, is characteristic of the modern Italian, and to which I shall have occasion again to allude. No fine company in a private box at the Scala or the Pergola could be more indifferent to the spectacle as a whole, and more knowing in bestowing their attention on the regulation points, than were these Lucchese contadini.

It is not necessary to dwell on the music, a pitiable dissonant scraping and too-tooing, which preceded the rising of the curtain. It did rise at length, and displayed a stage which looked a little wider than that whereon Punch is wont to enact his popular history. The first was a front scene, so very much a front scene that the performers had some difficulty in edging their way off the stage without coming in contact with the canvas screen on the one hand, or the row of footlights on the other; for there were footlights, and the stage was illuminated, in singular contrast with the broad sunshine which reigned in the audience part of the theatre.

Scene the first showed us a chamber with Judith and her lady's-maid. (Thus designated in the libretto.) And Judith forthwith began to bewail the death of her beloved husband, Manasses, and to protest that she could never be consoled for his loss. But what was our surprise to find that Judith did not speak, but sang her sorrows; that the attendant respectfully offered her comfort in the same manner; and that, in brief, throughout all the play, no word was uttered in a speaking voice. The sounds adopted were a sort of chant, something between a recitative and a street cry, with occasional turns and flourishes at the will of the performer.

The wearisome effect of this monotonous chant, which never varied (save by more or less tremulous flourishes, as of a goat aspiring to sing) throughout a long drama, cannot easily be conceived by those who have never undergone a similar experience. Tenors, basses, sopranos, and contraltos, each and all uttered their speeches by means of the same succession of sounds. Only now and then the owner of an exceptionally high or an exceptionally low voice would abruptly change the key, and give out his lines two or three tones above or below the others, without the slightest previous warning or preparation. Preparation, in the way of modulation, was in truth impossible, for there was no orchestral accompaniment; and these sudden changes of pitch, when at rare intervals they did occur, came upon one with a singular jar and general sense of dislocation.

Altogether the chanting was terribly trying. Indeed, after we had sat at the performance about an hour and a half, my companion observed, plaintively, that he could not have believed such utter weariness and exhaustion to be producible by the sense of hearing.

The play was in octosyllabic verse, and in stanzas of four lines each, whereof the first and last, and the two middle ones, rhymed. The argument followed the apocryphal book of Judith closely; but the language was certainly neither Biblical nor Oriental in its character. Such few poetic, or quasi-poetic, images as were to be found in it, were imitated from Tasso and Ariosto. Perhaps the expression "l'alto Motore," which frequently occurs, meaning the Almighty, may be held to have a Dantesque flavour.

No conscious attempt to caricature the heroic poems alluded to, or, indeed, one might say, to caricature the high-flown and heroic in general, could approach the absurdity of this composition. I am the fortunate possessor of three original manuscripts of Maggi in an unadulterated condition as regards orthography and syntax. And I look upon them as rare and valuable specimens growing in a little-known by-way of literature. To any one with a relish for the humorous they are a real treasure.

But it is time to return to Judith and her faithful attendant, who were discovered on the rising of the curtain.

Judith's appearance was striking. She was a short, broad, powerful-looking woman, with a wig of brown hair hanging in stiff curls all round her head, and at each side of her face. Her cheeks were highly coloured with some coarse powder, which looked like the "raddle" used for brick floors in some country parts of England. She wore a straight black gown of the pattern of the patriarch's garments in a child's Noah's Ark, high to the throat, and with long sleeves, and on her head was a turban of sombre hue. For the widow of Manasses has been, and still is, mourning the departed in "rozzi panni"—coarse clothing—and announces her intention of continuing in the same all the days of her life. The scene is of the briefest; Judith wails, and the lady's-maid reminds her that "sorrows pass away, but the eternal glory remains for ever." Upon which not very definite piece of comfort Judith replies: "You console me. Let us go to pray l'alto Motore, that he will give us vigour to surmount our woe." And

exeunt heroine and confidante. We are next shown the Royal Palace in Nineveh, and are introduced to King Nabuchodonosor, Amurath, Holofernes, and Schem (a heterogeneous assemblage of names truly), together with other warriors and nobles. The costumes worn by these nobilities are of the poorest and tawdriest kind. But brightness and glitter are not the most intrinsically valuable elements in costume any more than in other things, and brightness and glitter are accordingly displayed more or less profusely by all the performers. Tinsel and coloured foil-paper play a large part in the production of the general effect. The dresses are Turkish in style, great turbans, wide trousers confined at the ankle, and so forth. Every head bears a wig, a strange stiff wig, like the wigs which are used for cheap wax dolls; every face is violently reddened, and the eyebrows blackened with enthusiastic liberality of pigment. On the whole the aspect of the dramatis personæ resembles that of the coloured theatrical portraits which used to adorn the cheap print-shops in the days of my youth. The actors move in a wooden, constrained manner, and reveal in the course of the play every conceivable kind of voice except a good one. There is the guttural, the nasal, the wiry, the gruff, the bawling. After attentive observation I am unable to say that we discovered any scintillation of dramatic instinct save in one solitary instance. The exception to the rule was a young man who represented Amurath, a captain in the army of Holofernes, and he certainly had some notion of moving and speaking like a living human being, and of assuming the bearing of a gay insouciant young soldier, very advantageously placed on the staff of the great commander-in-chief.

It is far from my intention to inflict on the reader all the tediousness which our artists, with Dogberryian generosity, so lavishly bestowed upon us. And I renounce any attempt to follow the play scene by scene. But one or two salient points may be noted.

On his first appearance, King Nabuchodonosor plunges at once into the heart of the matter. He declares that:

Of Media now the vast empire
Having fallen 'neath my command,
The whole round world my warrior band
With you to conquer I desire.*

A modest aspiration, which is, however, far

* Della Media il vasto impero
Già caduto è in poter mio,
E di vincere ho desio
Con voi, prodi, il mondo intiero.

surpassed by his next sentence, to the effect that he (Nabuchodonosor) is divine, and requires to be adored accordingly. The simple brevity of his statement may perhaps shock English readers; he observes without circumlocution or ambiguity, "Io son Iddio." And adds, addressing his braves, "and I hope you recognise me!"

This being the state of the case, the Assyrian monarch is naturally incensed at the stiff-neckedness of a certain "popolo d'Israel"—Hebrew recalcitrant wretches, who it appears have not yet satisfactorily "recognised" him. And he sends forth his armies to convert them to orthodox principles in a fashion which has been largely employed for similar ends since the days of Nabuchodonosor—to wit, with fire and sword.

The captains, with Holofernes at their head, make no difficulty in adoring their king as a divinity, and eagerly promise to reduce the Israelites to obedience, or to put every one of them to death by the cruellest methods. Also by the king's express command they are to destroy the Temple of Sion, and to "break the idols" in it.

This touch may be intended as a subtle indication on the part of the author that Nabuco was entirely ignorant of the nature of the Jewish religion. But in my opinion by "idols" he means nothing more than the images of the Madonna and the saints, which would naturally be found in the place of worship of so pious a people. My neighbours among the audience—especially one stout, gentle-faced matron with a little child in her arms—were anxious to explain to me that this was a war of religious persecution by the Pagans against the Christians. "Giuditta, you know, was a Christian." And of course a devout Roman Catholic.

How Nabuco fared in his enterprise must be told next week.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LXXIX. LIGHT APPROACHES.

IN a situation in any degree resembling Maud's—a captivity in which all contact with the outer world, and all communication with friends, are effectually prevented—delays unexplained appear supernaturally long; time moves so slowly; the idea of neglect and oblivion is so often uppermost; and despair always near.

One morning, some time after the scene

at Roydon between Lady Vernon and Mr. Dawe, Mercy Creswell appeared before Maud, with an unusually reserved countenance.

"You'll be wanted down-stairs, miss, at twelve o'clock, in the doctor's office, to-day," she said.

"And what is this for?" asked Maud, startled.

"Well, miss, I do believe it is a gentleman from the Lord High Chancellor as is come down to ask you some questions," answered Mercy.

"Oh! oh! Really?" faltered Maud, with a secret prescience of a coming crisis. Her message had not been in vain, and here was the result of a powerful and friendly interposition.

"You need not to be frightened, miss, they won't do you no harm. There was one came down here last year to see a very rich patient, and I dessay the Chancellor was making a nice thing of his money and estates, while he was locked up here; I should not wonder: anyhow, he would not let him out from here till he found he could not keep him shut up no longer. So before he took him out he sends one of his gentlemen down here to make, as we thought, all the fuss he could about letting him away and home again to manage his own business, but home he went for all that. His name was Hempenfeldt, a tall thin man of fifty, with a hooked nose, and gold by-glass, and used to wear a white hat and blue frock-coat, and buff waistcoat, and them varnish boots."

Maud looked at her watch. It was past eleven.

"Did you ever see the Honourable Mr. Marston, Lady Mardykes's brother, miss?" inquired Mercy, who had grown to be on easy terms with the young lady in her charge.

"Yes, I have. What about him?" inquired Maud, as carelessly as if her heart had not fluttered up to her lips and dropped down dead again.

"Because I saw him, and a little black gentleman, just up to his elbow, talking to Doctor Antomarchi, and Miss Medwyn is in the waiting-room."

Perhaps Mercy thought that these signs betokened the early liberation of Maud, and became more communicative as the likelihood of her again emerging into light, and becoming a personage in the living world, improved.

Maud knew now that battle was actually waged in her behalf, and that a few

hours might see her free, and on her way to Wybourne with dear old Maximilla Medwyn.

But, oh, no! she would not allow herself to believe anything so incredible. It could not happen. To admit a hope so immense would be to insure a plunge into the deepest hell of disappointment. And yet that hope possessed her, and she was nearly wild with its excitement.

"Do you think Miss Medwyn will be allowed to see me?" asked Maud.

"I don't know, miss; they was jealous of you seeing any one; and I'm sure there's no good in you asking, whatever they may say when *she* does."

Maud, being quite of the same opinion, made no move, well knowing that Maximilla would leave no stone unturned to obtain a few minutes' sight of her.

Mr. Darkdale arrived, with a knock at the sitting-room door. His business was to deliver a formal intimation from Doctor Antonarchi that Miss Vernon was to hold herself in readiness to come to his room, at twelve o'clock, to answer some questions which an official person would have to put to her, and to request that she would be good enough not to leave her rooms until his messenger should arrive to conduct her to his office.

In a state of suspense Maud awaited Antonarchi's summons in her sitting-room. Twelve o'clock came, and no summons yet. Ten minutes, twenty minutes, half an hour passed. The little timepiece in her room struck one.

Mr. Darkdale arrived a minute or two later. He looked stern and thoughtful. Mercy Creswell was summoned. She was to go alone with Mr. Darkdale. Miss Vernon was to be so good as to await her, or his, return where she was. These attendants would wait upon her in the mean time.

Two of the stalwart housemaids in the Glarewoods uniform entered quietly, and stood near the door.

Mercy Creswell looked a little disagreeably surprised at the occurrence; but she accompanied Mr. Darkdale in silence; and Maud remained in utter ignorance of all that was taking place down-stairs, upon the issue of the ordeal that was to decide her fate.

In less than ten minutes Mercy Creswell returned, looking hot and agitated. The temporary attendants were withdrawn, and Maud, being alone with her maid, questioned her as to what was going on.

"I'm not to tell *nothing* about it, miss; them's my orders."

"The inquiry is about me, isn't it? Surely you can tell me so much," urged Maud.

"Well, yes, miss; it is about you, and not another thing will I say about it. Where's the use of me running that risk without no good to no one?"

Mercy was obstinate and held to her resolution spite of all Maud's importunities and promises of secrecy; and Maud in the burning fever of her agitation walked from room to room, and from window to window, unable to rest for a moment.

If she could only tell how it was going! By what right was she excluded from her own trial? How unfairly her case might be dealt with! And, oh! but to think of all that depends on the next hour.

In the waiting-room Mr. Marston and old Miss Medwyn had met Mr. Dawe, and were in high chat when Mr. Tintern was shown in. He had not perhaps expected to meet Miss Vernon's friends in such force. He knew only that he was to see Mr. Dawe there. He would have preferred not meeting Miss Medwyn. He smiled pensively, and shook hands, and shrugged pathetically over the melancholy state of things which had called them there.

"And poor Lady Vernon, what a deplorable thing for her! Only think, a mother, you know, and all that kind of thing; so awfully distressing! I know, for my part, I should rather lose a child by death outright, and be spared the anguish of such an affliction as this."

He looked round upon them with a sad shake of the head, and a slow wave of his hand, which was intended generally to indicate Miss Vernon, the lunatic asylum, its inmates and apparatus; and this pantomime terminated in a slight but expressive elevation of the eyes and hand, and another desolate shrug.

"Lady Vernon lives in hopes," he continued, liking, I fancy, to talk rather than to be talked to, on this subject. "She thinks this will not be a very tedious—a—illness. All this is, of course, quite dark at Roydon. No one there—I have not even mentioned it to my wife—not a human being but I and Doctor Malkin——"

"Ho! Doctor Malkin! Well, that does not surprise me," exclaimed Miss Medwyn, in an angry parenthesis.

"Not a living person but he and I, and Lady Vernon herself, in all that part of the world, has the least idea there is anything

of the kind; and you know we may look to see her very soon, I do hope, quite as we could wish."

"Very soon, I should hope, Mr. Tintern; sooner even than some of her friends expect," said Maximilla, with a tart emphasis. "She is under very special restraint here. They won't permit me so much as to see her! What can be the reason of that? I don't suppose I can hurt her; and as to my share of the danger, I'm quite willing to risk that, ha ha, ha!—poor little Maud!" and with these words Maximilla Medwyn suddenly burst into tears.

Mr. Tintern looked with much feeling at Mr. Dawe; but a blacker shadow seemed to have gathered about that odd figure.

Mr. Marston, at the further end of the long room, was trying to read some papers connected with the proceedings, but his eye every moment wandered to the door, through which he expected the summons of a messenger from the commissioner.

Maximilla's tears disconcerted Mr. Tintern, who walked first to the window, and then to Mr. Dawe, to whom, with another shrug, he murmured:

"Most harrowing! No place for ladies, this!"

Mr. Dawe grunted.

Maximilla's sobs did not last long. A footman entered and presented a little note to Mr. Dawe.

Mr. Dawe read it. The eyes of Mr. Marston and Miss Medwyn were now directed on him very anxiously.

"It is all right," said Mr. Dawe, in his dry tones.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Maximilla.

And Mr. Marston looked as if he would have said the same.

Mr. Tintern eyed them curiously. What was "all right?" He would have given something to know.

Mr. Dawe walked up to Maximilla briskly, and saying, "Read that," placed the note in her hands.

It said:

DEAR MR. DAWE,—I have very great pleasure in saying that Mr. Commissioner Steele has no objection, under the circumstances of this case, to your being present, although your request, coming from one who is not related to the family, is not usual; and the only condition he imposes is, that you make no public use of what you are permitted to witness; and he reserves to himself, of course, the right of dispensing with your presence at any time he may

express a wish to be more to himself. I write this with pleasure, as I look upon your presence as a protection to myself.

Yours truly,

MICHAEL ANATOMARCHI.

P.S.—You are at liberty to accompany Mr. Tintern when the commissioner sends for him.

This summons was not long in coming.

Mr. Tintern looked with an air of studied curiosity and polite surprise at Mr. Dawe as that gentleman accompanied him.

Mr. Dawe did not care. Those looks did not overawe him.

CHAPTER LXXX. BEFORE THE COMMISSIONER.

THEY found the commissioner, with Doctor Antomarchi, in the oval-room, to which the servant conducted them.

Mr. Commissioner Steele is a tall, gentleman-like looking man, with a dark face, closely shaved, black curly hair, a little streaked with white, growing close over his broad, but not high, forehead. He looks at them with eyes nearly shut, and a little frown, after the manner of near-sighted people, and he is twirling round his finger an eye-glass. He rises, and receives these gentlemen with a short bow, and looks to Doctor Antomarchi to explain them. The doctor, who has seen them before, does so.

"Oh! Mr. Dawe? The gentleman who wishes to be present on behalf of Miss Vernon?" asked the commissioner.

"Yes," said Antomarchi.

"Have you considered, Doctor Antomarchi," hesitated Mr. Tintern, "whether Lady Vernon would quite wish that arrangement? The young lady's mother," he explains to the commissioner, "she is naturally extremely anxious that as little as possible of this very painful case should become generally known; she wished it, in fact, as private as possible."

"Yes; but in this case it is not a simple relation of mother and child," said Mr. Steele, fluently, while arranging his papers. "The young lady has quite different interests, and on a very great scale; and it is only reasonable that some one, in whom her relations have confidence, should be permitted, in her interest, to hear what passes. Mr. Tintern, you are a magistrate?"

"Yes, sir."

"The depositions in this matter, were sworn before you?"

"They were, sir."

"You have brought with you the original depositions?"

"Yes, sir."

"Be so kind as to hand them to me. Thanks; Mr. Dawe, while I read these, you can read the attested copies which Doctor Antomarchi will be so good as to give you."

Doctor Antomarchi placed the papers before Mr. Dawe, who received them with one of his stiff bows, and read them with characteristic care.

"Lady Vernon is not here?" asked the commissioner.

"No," answered Antomarchi.

"Nor that man, Elihu Lizard?"

"He is not here."

"These affidavits are very strong. Lady Vernon deposes that her daughter, the subject of this inquiry, has for some years exhibited a growing eccentricity and violence, which have caused her extreme anxiety; that latterly these peculiarities had, in her opinion, become distinctly morbid, and that on a certain evening, the date of which she states, Miss Vernon intimated an intention of putting an end to her own life. That this had been preceded by two distinct occurrences of a similar kind, within little more than a year antecedent to the last threat of this sort, at Roydon Hall."

The commissioner paused and looked at Mr. Dawe.

"Doctor Malkin, the family physician, states that the young lady is of a highly nervous temperament, with strange ideas, such as are popularly termed flighty, that she is hysterical and impetuous, and without sufficient self-control to counteract the obvious tendencies of such a mental and nervous condition. That with this knowledge of predisposing causes at work, he cannot refer the facts set out in Lady Vernon's and Elihu Lizard's depositions to any cause other than insanity too considerably developed to be safely committed to any but the constant supervision and treatment of an able physician, residing under the same roof, and experienced in the treatment of insanity. He says he cannot undertake the responsibility of advising Lady Vernon to keep the young lady at home, an experiment which has often been attended, he remarks, especially when suicidal tendencies have existed, with fatal consequences. That is very strong, you observe," he said, throwing his head back, and glancing at Mr. Dawe.

Mr. Dawe grunted.

"You think that very strong?" said the commissioner.

"No," said Mr. Dawe, "I don't mind Lady Vernon; and the Roydon doctor is in her pocket. He thinks what *she* thinks, and *she* thinks whatever she likes."

Mr. Commissioner Steele popped his glass in his eye and stared at this outspoken little man, as he might at a curious creature in a menagerie, and then he resumed.

"Well, here's Elihu Lizard," said the commissioner, who had opened another paper; "I think *here* perhaps it will be as well to ask Miss Medwyn to be good enough to come in—she may, possibly, have something to explain."

Mr. Steele leaned back in his chair, and Doctor Antomarchi again touched the bell, and the servant in a minute more announced Miss Medwyn.

The commissioner rose and made his bow. Miss Medwyn glanced shrewdly at him, to ascertain what manner of man the judge might be.

"I'll tell you what Elihu Lizard states, if you please, Miss Medwyn, and you can make any remarks that strike you."

"So I shall," said Miss Medwyn.

"He swears he followed Miss Vernon from place to place."

"Who sent him?" asked Mr. Dawe.

"I know no more than the affidavit states; you have the copy." He found that she acted with very marked eccentricity during a tour she made with her cousin, that was you, Miss Medwyn; she concealed her name, and passed herself off as a Miss Maud Guendoline; she represented herself as being, and the deponent seems to think, for the time, actually believed the statement, obliged to make her livelihood by selling her water-colour sketches; she told people that she was miserably poor, and, in social position, extremely humble; and Elihu Lizard believes that, at the time, she seriously thought that all these statements were true."

"She thought no such thing," said Miss Medwyn. "It was all done in the spirit of frolic; just what any young creature a little wayward, and quite wild with spirits, as she was, in the enjoyment of a little holiday, would do; and no one ever dreamed of supposing her mad."

"Did she tell you, Miss Medwyn, during your excursion, at any time, that she did not believe these representations herself?"

"No, certainly, it was quite unnecessary;

she knew that such an idea had never entered my mind."

"You have a strong opinion, then, in favour of Miss Vernon's sanity?"

"It is not an opinion, I am quite certain of it."

"But suppose it were proved to you that she has, at three distinct times, threatened her own life while at Roydon; and that once, since she came here, she has not only threatened, but attempted it; would not that modify your opinion as to the expediency of removing at once all restraint and superintendence in her case?"

"It's quite untrue. I have no other answer. It is utterly false."

"I only say, as a supposition, suppose it were proved——"

"It would not make the least difference; I could not believe it," she answered peremptorily; "I never shall."

The commissioner smiled and shook his head.

"There is another odd circumstance deposed to here," he resumes; "at a ball at a place called Wy—Wymering, I think it is; where she went with—with *you*, Miss Medwyn, to join the party of a Mrs. Tintern——"

"My wife," interposed Mr. Tintern, softly.

"Oh! I see, thanks; where Miss Vernon went to join Mrs. Tintern's party," continued the commissioner. "She insisted on visiting the gallery of the town-hall, before the company had assembled, and once more, in an unreal character, she presented herself as your servant, the deposition says."

"That was precisely in the same spirit; a merewhim; she had been looking forward, for a long time, to the ball, and was in such spirits, poor little thing!"

Miss Medwyn was as near as possible crying again, and had to pull up suddenly.

The commissioner offered no criticism on Miss Medwyn's explanation. And after a little silence, for he saw she was agitated, he asked:

"Perhaps you would like to look over Lady Vernon's statement? There is no objection."

Miss Medwyn thanked him, and took the paper, which she read over, her face frowning a little, pale and scornful, as she did so.

When she had conned it over, and returned the paper, he asked:

"Have you anything, Miss Medwyn, by way of explanation, or generally, to state,

which you think might throw light on this inquiry?"

Miss Medwyn had a great deal to say, and said it, more than once, with great volubility, and in high scorn of all opposition. When her harangue was over, the commissioner thanked her very much, and rose, with a bow or two, and Doctor Antomarchi politely conducted her again to the waiting-room, where Mr. Marston received her with intense anxiety.

Mr. Dawe had, on hearing his narrative, peremptorily forbidden his appearance as a witness, and blew up Maximilla roundly, in his proper laconics, for having permitted all that masquerading which now furnished the chief material of the case.

Maximilla answered that she *could* not have prevented it; and that if that had never happened, still a case would not have been wanting, because it was plain, from different things in Barbara's statement, that she had employed people to watch Maud wherever she went.

As Mr. Marston and Maximilla Medwyn were now conversing, Mr. Dawe, whose chief object was to note carefully in his memory the facts on which the theory of Maud's insanity was based, with a view to action of a different kind should this measure fail, had the pleasure of listening to Mercy Creswell's description of what she had termed Maud's "parrokism."

Then came an account of her attempt to get into the hall in pursuit of Lady Marydykes; of her throwing herself on the stairs, of what was called her violence, and ultimate reduction to submission under moral influences. Then Doctor Antomarchi made his statement, stronger, abler, more learned than the opinion of Doctor Malkin, and in conclusion he said:

"This is a case, I admit, I should be happy to be relieved of. It is a case round which family feuds and jealousies gather and prepare for battle. We have never been in litigation here; and although I cannot conscientiously recommend Lady Vernon to take the young lady home, I should be very much obliged if she would remove her to some other house."

CHAPTER LXXXI. MAUD IS SUMMONED.

"I SHOULD like," said the commissioner, "to see the young lady now; and after that, Doctor Antomarchi, if you please, I could have a few words with you. Mr. Dawe, are you acquainted with Miss Vernon?"

Mr. Dawe assented.

"What do you say, Doctor Automarchi, to Mr. Dawe's remaining while Miss Vernon answers a few questions?"

"I should be most happy if I were not certain that in her present state a meeting of the kind would be, as respects the progress of her recovery, almost the worst thing that could happen to Miss Vernon. I speak with the responsibility of her medical adviser; and I must request Mr. Dawe to withdraw, unless you, sir, should direct otherwise."

"Then, Mr. Dawe, I must ask you to retire," says the commissioner, making him a little bow.

Mr. Dawe rose, and returned it with a nod; the servant conducted him to the waiting-room; and Doctor Automarchi turned the key in the door through which he had retreated.

Doctor Automarchi and Mr. Commissioner Steele had a little bit of earnest conversation. The long period of Miss Vernon's suspense at length expired.

Never did imprisoned lady in the Reign of Terror hear herself summoned to the presence of the tremendous Fouquierismville with a colder pang of horror than that which unnerved Maud Vernon, at the tap at her door, and the intimation that the time had come, and her presence was required by the commissioner.

"Are there many people in the room with him?" Maud asked, rising quickly, very pale, and feeling a little dizzy.

"Only the doctor, please, miss."

The young lady followed the servant; Mercy Creswell stumping after, with a supernaturally solemn countenance.

Maud did not know how she reached the office door. At sight of that solid barrier, its well varnished panels and oak veining, her heart bounded as if it would suffocate her.

"Wait a moment," she whispered to the man who was about opening the door to announce her. "Not yet."

She must not seem flurried. All for her depended on her perfect self-possession in presence of this stranger, who held the key of her prison.

She signed to the man, who opened the door, and she heard her name announced.

Now she is in the room. Automarchi, whom she distrusts and fears, rises and makes her a very grave and ceremonious bow. She turns from that smooth face, that frightens her, to the commissioner, who has also risen, and makes her a less elaborate bow. Intelligent, energetic, nar-

row, utterly unsympathetic, is the face of her judge. Instinctively she is dismayed by it.

She sits down, hardly knowing what she does, in a chair opposite the commissioner. He asks her some question, the purport of which she does not distinctly catch. She sees nothing but that cold, shrewd, self-complacent face which dismays her.

The stern ringing voice of Automarchi repeats the question, and she turns. He is looking at her. She finds herself under the spell of those baleful eyes.

"Mr. Commissioner Steele asked you whether you are aware that you are sworn to have on three distinct occasions, at Roydon, threatened to take away your life?"

"I was not aware, that is, I don't know what is said against me," she says with an effort, and a little confusedly.

"May I ask her a few questions?" inquires Automarchi.

"Do, pray," acquiesces the commissioner.

He bowed to Mr. Steele, and then said:

"Be so good as to look a little this way." She had averted her eyes. "I want to be assured that you hear me."

She submitted, and he proceeded.

"You are frank, Miss Vernon, and would not mislead this inquiry. Did you not intend to commit suicide at Roydon?"

Miss Vernon faltered; she tried instinctively to raise her hand to her eyes, but she did not raise it higher than her throat, where she felt a great ball rising.

"I'm sorry to press you, but we must accept your silence as an admission," said the cold bass of Automarchi. "Is it not true," he persisted, sternly, "that you intended suicide, three distinct times, when at Roydon?"

"I—I can't," faltered Maud.

"I know you can't," he repeated, and you could not *there*, I believe."

"I could not *there*—I believe—if—if— What am I saying? Oh, God! *what* am I saying?"

"Never regret speaking candidly to friends; Mr. Commissioner Steele, of whom you seem so much in awe, can have no object in this inquiry but what tends to your good. Now, as to what occurred *here*—up-stairs—when you told Mercy Creswell you would make away with yourself, and she locked you into your room in consequence, and you then threw up the window. Come, be frank, Miss Vernon, did you not do so with the intention of taking

away your life, by throwing yourself from it; you confessed it."

"Did I—did I confess it? I confessed——" she murmured, with white lips.

"You did—that's right—it is hardly necessary to do so again, but if you can deny it, or explain it, you are at liberty to do so."

Mr. Steele was, while this was passing, glancing at his notes, and marking the papers before him with his pen, and saw nothing of the fatuised look that had stolen over Maud's face, and if he had, would have attributed it to her imputed mental condition.

"You *can't* explain, or deny it—I am to infer *that*," persisted Antomarchi; "you *can't*."

"I can't—can I?—I can't—oh! what is it?—I feel so strangely." She shook her ears as if a fly was humming at them, and lifted her pretty fingers towards her temple vaguely.

"You say you can't, and that is quite enough—I expected no less from your candour; and as you say you feel a little oddly, it will perhaps be better that you should return to your room, if Mr. Commissioner has no objection?"

"Certainly not," acquiesced the official, who, with half-closed eyes, was now eyeing Miss Vernon curiously.

"You may go, Miss Vernon. See Miss Vernon to her room," said Antomarchi to the servant. "Instantly, please; she is agitated."

Maud was standing now, and looked a little about her, bewildered, as if newly awakened from sleep.

"Oh! what is it? What have I said? let me remember——"

"Never regret having spoken truth, Miss Vernon," said Antomarchi; "you must go," he said sternly to her, and added quickly in a whisper to Mr. Steele, "If she stays we shall have a paroxysm."

The commissioner, who had no fancy for anything of the kind, rose at the same moment, and made a hasty bow.

"Oh, sir; no, don't send me back; have mercy on me! It is false," she screamed. "If I said anything against myself, I re-

tract it all. You are here to try me; God sees us; oh, my last hope!"

This last cry was heard in the passage as the door shut; and the commissioner and Doctor Antomarchi were left tête-à-tête.

The doctor smiled and shrugged.

"Retract, retract; they all retract after an admission. People who don't know something of them, as you and I do, have no notion how much cunning belongs to that state, and how little scruple. You see the excitement she has gone away in, and simply from having seen you and me! What would it be if she were to see an intimate friend? How could we separate them? And yet, I venture to say, Miss Medwyn thinks it a great hardship she has not had an interview with the young lady—I should not wonder if the patient became violent; I rather expect to be sent for."

This, and a good deal more, said Doctor Antomarchi; and, after some conversation, invited the commissioner to luncheon, which that semi-judicial functionary, having first consulted his Bradshaw, agreed to partake of; and over it he relaxed, and conversed about fifty things, very pleasantly, and laughed over the agreeable doctor's amusing stories. While up-stairs, Maud Vernon, on her knees, with her face buried in the coverlet, writhed and sobbed wildly in the solitude of an immeasurable despair.

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CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

CHAPTER IX. DOUBT.

WHEN Gerald Hardinge saw the street-door close, shutting Madge Pierrepont from his view, he remained stationary for a minute, gazing on the spot whence she had disappeared, and then turned away with an indescribable feeling of happiness and elation in his breast. Her last words to him had been but feebly uttered it is true, and had told him that she was ill, but he believed this illness to be merely the result of mental excitement and physical prostration, which would speedily pass away, never to re-appear in the calm, happy future which he had planned for her, while the thrilling pressure of her hand, as she left him, gave higher hopes than could be given by any words that this future was accepted by her.

As the young man walked with a light quick step along the deserted streets, he lifted his hat to catch as much as possible of the cool night breeze, which retained some of the freshness of the sea, whence it was blown, mingled with the fragrance of the gardens and orchards which it had traversed in its career towards the old city, and raising his eyes to the star-strewn blue heavens above him, felt half inclined to believe that all nature gloried in his happiness, and shared in his success. Conscious presently of the creeping, shambling female figure by his side, which addressed him in whining tones imploring alms, he stopped and handed to it such largess as to evoke a shower of fulsome thanks from its recipient, who hurried away, fearful lest a second thought should make him repent

of his munificence. Needless to say that no such thought crossed Gerald's mind. Not on such a night as that at least could he be appealed to in vain; he had himself been made supremely happy, and only delighted in doing what he could to increase the happiness of others.

Supremely happy indeed! The silence of the streets was almost oppressive to him. He wanted to take not man but nature into his confidence. He wanted to be alone in a garden, on a mountain top, in a boat upon the river or the sea, anywhere, so that without rendering himself ridiculous he could put into words the gratitude that filled his heart, the joy that thrilled his frame, and tingled in his pulses. Even there, in the precincts, hemmed in by the high old gabled houses, inside of which the decorous dignitaries of the cathedral and their staid families lay wrapped in dreamless slumber, he felt inclined to cry aloud, to break into a swift running pace, to do anything which would give vent to the unspoken joy then pent within his breast.

It was lucky that he refrained from giving way to any of these eccentricities; for the next moment, as he turned the corner of the street, he found himself confronted by a group of men who were advancing from the opposite direction. Scarcely gazing at them—assuredly not recognising any of them—Gerald was stepping into the roadway with the intention of allowing them to pass, when he heard his own name called out in a loud tone, and immediately recognised the voice pronouncing it as belonging to Mr. Dunsany. The speaker was indeed that histrionic genius, who followed up his salutation by seizing Gerald lightly by the collar, and, as he turned round to his admiring friends, call-

ing out with tragic emphasis, "Trapped at last."

"Trapped at last," echoed a tall man, with a thin hatchet face, bright beady eyes, and a thick moustache. "Deuced good title for a three-act drama; see my way to it at once. Act the first, Setting the Snare; act the second, Nearing the Noose; act the third, Trapped at Last. Lapse of ten years is supposed to occur between the second and third acts. There you have it!"

"Oh, drop that gaff, Hayward," said Dunsany; "and you, Gerald, don't stand there looking like old Blowhard when he plays the Idiot Witness."

"A part which comes quite natural to him," interrupted Mr. Hayward.

"Well, come along, Gerald," continued Dunsany; "we have got a little supper at the Swan, and I have been looking everywhere for you to make one of the party. Now I've got you, so come along."

"Not to-night," commenced Gerald; "I am awfully tired, and was on my way home to bed. Not to-night, please."

"Oh, no, not to-night," repeated Dunsany in a bantering tone, "certainly not to-night; let us say we will meet this night twelvemonth, and at Philippi, please! Come out of that, you villain! Do you think I am going to let you go now I have once got hold of you? More especially when old Blowhard told me just now you were not coming back to him, and he should have to look out for a new scene-painter. Put your arm in mine, and come along."

"But I really am horribly tired," pleaded Gerald.

"If you are tired, count" (the nickname which Gerald Hardinge's looks and manners had gained for him amongst the company, and by which he generally went), "if you are tired, count," said another of the bystanders, Mr. Minneken, a dashing young roué of fifty-eight, with a purple head and a ragged purple moustache, and who was the light comedian of the company, "go to your bed at the natural hour of four A.M. Never invoke the miserable Morpheus at a time which should be sacred to the blisses of Bacchus and the kisses of Venus."

A general chorus of "Bravo, Minny!" rewarded this flight of fancy.

"Letting alone the fact that I sleep next to you, my dear Gerald," said Dunsany, "and that when I arrive at the hour so neatly indicated just now, I am likely to disturb you from your slumber."

The proposition to end his evening in this manner was assuredly very different from

what Gerald Hardinge had either expected or wished. He had longed for some place in which he could commune with himself, for some solitude where he could orally convince himself of the happiness which he had just secured; and he was now bidden to make one of a party of convivial roysterers in a tavern reeking with liquor and tobacco. But he did not like to urge any further the refusal to the invitation thus pressed upon him. Several of those present, and especially Dunsany, had shown him much rough kindness and attention during the time he had passed among them, and he was conscious that there was prevalent in the company an intuitive suspicion of the difference between his former and his present position in life, which would render them doubly susceptible to any apparent slight. So he ceased to make any further opposition to their wishes, and his assent being received with a shout which awoke the slumbering echoes of the old Guildhall portico, and brought the policeman down a by-street with hurried footsteps very different from his usual measured pace, the party proceeded on their way rejoicing.

The Swan, towards which the convivial company was making its way, was a regular type of a theatrical tavern. Ordinarily, the house "used" by the actors and their friends is to be found in the immediate vicinity of the theatre. But the inhabitants of Wexeter had scruples about allowing any establishment of the kind to flourish in the proximity of the cathedral; while the church dignitaries, who were potential in such matters, took care that the precincts dwelt in by them should be kept free from the contamination of a tavern of any kind, and especially one which was likely to be frequented by the lower class of theatrical performers. So that the Swan was compelled to build her nest at some little distance off, down at the bottom of the hill indeed, and near the wharves abutting on the navigable portion of the river Wexe, where huge barks of timber lie strewn about, where the road is always gritty with coal-dust, and where there is a perpetual maritime smell of boiling pitch and fresh tar. None of the bargemen, Jacks-in-the-water, or river-side idlers, however, dream of going into the Swan, which is known as the actors' house of call, and is given up exclusively to them. The landlord is a retired "heavy man" from the Norfolk circuit; his wife, stout and unwieldy though she be now, was once the brightest

of singing chamber-maids at Portsmouth; and his two sons, with their celebrated dog Beppo, are now extracting money from the pockets of Australian diggers, by their splendid performance of the Forest of Bondy. All day long, lounging in front of the street-door, or leaning listlessly against the portal, are to be seen sallow, keen-eyed men, whiskerless, indeed, but with an outline blue map on cheek and chin, showing what tremendous hirsute power is kept in abeyance by the exigencies of the profession. From time to time they will enter the house and drop into the bar—a snuggerly where not one scrap of wall is to be seen, so covered is it with play-bills, and placards, and portraits of celebrated theatrical characters—take a drink standing, chat with the barmaid, who, like every other inmate of the establishment, is steeped to the lips in dramatic lore, or glance through the pages of the Haresfoot, the theatrical journal, especially coming the advertisements of managers in quest of talent.

In the course of the theatrical season many banquets were usually given at the Swan, actors being proverbially of a hospitable and generous disposition, and no success of even the smallest kind was ever gained by any member of the company without its being duly commemorated in liquor. But there was never any noise or disturbance at these entertainments, and as the house was thoroughly well conducted, the police never interfered with its arrangements, and winked at occasional infractions of the law which prescribed a certain hour for closing.

That hour had pretty nearly arrived when Mr. Dunsany and his friends reached the Swan, and most of the ordinary guests had taken their departure. For the expected party, however, a room was prepared, and in a few minutes they were all seated round the table covered with the materials for a substantial meal. As the host, Mr. Dunsany took the chair, having Gerald on his right, and Mr. Minneken on his left. They were all too hungry to talk much at first, and, when their appetite began to be appeased, the conversation which ensued was such as might be expected in such a circle. The performances of the evening and of the past season generally, the short-comings, meannesses, and vanity of the manager Dobson (always spoken of as Blowhard), the chances of London engagements, and the gratitude due to the press, of which Mr. Hayward was the esteemed representative then pre-

sent. All these subjects were in turn discussed, and Gerald, who had taken very little part in the conversation, thought he saw the longed-for opportunity to slip away unperceived, when he heard a remark which instantly changed his intention.

Mr. Minneken was the speaker. "A divinity, sir," he exclaimed; "Madge Pierrepont is a divinity, nothing else. There is nothing to touch her on the stage now-a-days, nor has there been in my time. I've seen them all, sir; the finest women in London, by George! and there is not one of them you can compare to our Madge. Such an arched neck, such pouting lips, such a mass of capillary attractions, such a magnificent mane. By Heavens, sir, she is delicious!" And Mr. Minneken first kissed the tips of his fingers, and then waved them in the air.

When Gerald first heard the name of the woman he loved thus mentioned in a public company, he felt hot and angry. But it was impossible to be annoyed with Mr. Minneken, so earnest and impulsive was he, so chivalrous, and withal so respectful. Gerald recollected, moreover, that he had heard Madge speak of the kindness, which it was impossible to think of as influenced by any ulterior motive, shown to her by the old beau on her first joining the company. But he feared that the subject might be taken up by others, who would not handle it quite so tenderly, and he was right.

"She is all very well to look at," said Mr. Hayward. "What you call a fine woman, and that sort of thing, but she's no actress."

"No actress!" cried Dunsany.

"When did you find that out, Hayward?" asked Minneken.

"Ever since she refused to play the heroine in Hayward's five-act tragedy of Boadicea," said Gerald Hardinge. "Our friend has had no opinion of Miss Pierrepont's talent since then."

"Has Hayward written a five-act tragedy?" asked some one from the end of the table.

"I vote he stands a dinner, and reads it to us before it," said Mr. Potts, the prompter, who had been steadily eating ever since he arrived, and whose first utterance had reference to future food.

"No, no; after, after," cried Dunsany. "If he read the tragedy first none of us would be alive for the dinner."

"Who was Boadicea?" asked Mr. Potts's neighbour.

"Some Roman cove, I think!" said the prompter.

"It sounds to me like a name in the Bible," said his neighbour.

"Can't say," said Mr. Potts, whose biblical lore was limited.

"Well, I dare say you think all this is devilish funny," said Mr. Hayward, whose naturally sallow complexion seemed to be growing into a bright green, "but with all deference to that very excellent young gentleman over there, I repeat my opinion that Miss Pierrepont is no actress."

"By Heavens, sir, how you can say that I cannot understand!" said Minneken, wisely stepping in to intercept the outbreak of wrath which he anticipated from Gerald Hardinge. "Don't even the benighted clodhoppers in this semi-agricultural, semi-ecclesiastical neighbourhood, worship her? Don't they start at the smallest scintilla emitted by her glorious eye? Don't they follow every murmur of that deliciously soft voice, which comes to them through those rows of pearls like the sighing of the west wind over a summer sea? What more would you have, sir?"

"What more?" said Mr. Hayward, savagely. "I would have a little more go; a little more life; a little more passion! You, Minneken, have a reputation of having seen a good deal of life, and you have lived long enough, Heaven knows! but did you, in your experience, ever see a woman so cold, and statuesque, and passionless? Take her from first to last in all the love scenes she plays, and tell me is there a scrap of heart, a scrap of warmth in one of them?"

Before Mr. Minneken could reply, a little man, sitting midway down the table, said, with a low, chuckling laugh: "Perhaps she keeps her heart, and her warmth, and her passion, and all that, for private use. Don't do to parade 'em in public; oh no!"

The speaker was Mr. Snick, who was the "second old man" of the company, and who was generally regarded as having been allotted in life the same line of character which he had sustained all along in the theatre, namely, being sent on to make play for others, and only speaking in order to give other people the chance of reply. The expression by him of any original idea would have astonished the company, but such an opinion, emphasised as it was by him with his chuckle, caused intense surprise, and a short silence ensued, which was broken by Gerald Hardinge, who inquired, in rather a savage tone, what grounds Mr. Snick had for his statement.

To find the old man's remark taken

seriously, delighted the company in general, and Mr. Potts's neighbour, who had made the inquiry about Boadicea, rising to his feet, said gravely, "That he thought their friends would agree with him that no gentleman had a right to ask any questions about Mr. Snick's little love affairs."

The applause and laughter which greeted this remark incensed Gerald Hardinge still further. His cheeks flushed, and his eyes sparkled, as he rose from his chair, and said, hurriedly: "I care nothing about Mr. Snick, or his love affairs either, but he alluded to a lady, whose acquaintance I have the pleasure of possessing, in an offensive way, and with a certain innuendo in his manner which I think demands explanation."

Some of the company cried "hear," some "bosh," and Mr. Dunsany called out, at the top of his voice, "Come, Snick, you innuendoing vagabond, make a clean breast of it, and explain!"

Mr. Snick did not seem in the smallest degree put out by the hubbub and excitement he had created. On the contrary, he sat quietly sucking away at his long pipe, and when thus directly appealed to by Mr. Dunsany, he indulged in a few more chuckles before he remarked: "What I said I will stick to. Only when I spoke before I said perhaps she kept her warmth and her passion for private use; now, I say, there is no perhaps at all about it, I am sure she does!"

"Sure! How the devil can you be sure?" asked Mr. Hayward, looking across at him with a glance in which surprise was mingled with contempt.

"How can I be sure?" said the little man, with another chuckle; "why, from what you call in your newspaper language, ocular demonstration. I have seen her!"

"Seen your grandmother," roared out Mr. Dunsany, not liking the expression on Gerald Hardinge's face, and wishing to put an end to the discussion as quickly as possible. "Come out of that, Snick, and don't let's have any of your anecdotes."

"Not at all!" called out Gerald Hardinge, starting to his feet. "Mr. Snick, coming out of the region of possibility, has now made a positive statement respecting Miss Pierrepont, and I demand that he now enters fully into detail concerning what he alleges he saw."

"What right have you to demand anything of the kind?" asked Mr. Hayward.

"I will answer that question by-and-bye," said Gerald Hardinge, very quietly.

"Oh, sit down, Gerald, and don't be

bothering about an old omadhoun like that Snick," said Mr. Dunsany. "Sure, in addition to being always moithered, he has got about a pint of punch under his belt now, and is half-drunk already."

But Gerald Hardinge was deaf to all such entreaty; the accusation, he said, had been made, and must be given in detail. The others, by degrees, came round to this opinion, and even Mr. Dunsany said, in a half-jocular, half-savage manner: "Come, Snick, down on your marrow-bones, and confess your peccadillo, and I'll promise you absolution."

The various stages of these proceedings seemed fraught with the greatest delight to Mr. Snick, who still sat calmly sucking at his pipe, and chuckling after the emission of every separate whiff; and when he was at length called upon to speak, he spoke slowly and deliberately, but without the smallest hesitation.

"Some of you may know," he said, "and some mayn't, that owing to the screw I get from old Blowhard not being too magnificent, I endeavour to earn a little money by acting as agent for the sale of mineral waters and ginger-beer. There may be some among the company present," said the little man, looking round him with a leer and a chuckle, "who may have had soda-water from me which they have not paid for, and there may not. But that's neither here nor there. What I am coming to is this, that about a fortnight ago, it might be, I cannot say the exact day, but you will recollect it by that tremendous thunder-storm which we had, the only one there has been this summer, I thought to myself that not being in the bill that night, I would just walk up as far as Dumpington turnpike, where the tollman owed me a small account for ginger-beer, which he manages to sell a good deal of, it being good stuff, and not like the penny bottles, all pop and froth. Accordingly, soon after it was dusk, I strolled out there, and smoked a pipe with the tollman, and got the money from him, and set off to come back. I hadn't gone a hundred yards before I saw—it was a dark night, but I've got eyes like a cat—I saw a tall woman coming towards me, and I recognised her figure in a minute as Miss Pierrepont. 'What are you doing here, my lady, at this time of night?' says I to myself. 'I may as well see,' I says to myself, and with that I slipped into the hedge. She passed me so close that her dress almost brushed against me, and then I set out after her. She went along the road, and passed the turnpike,

and up that narrow lane, which, as some of you may know, runs by it. There she waited, walking up and down, as though expecting some one. I had hidden myself in another hedge, and was looking on, and presently I heard a heavy footstep, and I saw a tall man approaching. She walked straight up to meet him, and he stooped down, and put his arms around her, and kissed her. That's what he did!" And having made his point, the little man looked round to see the result.

Mr. Snick had expected, on reaching his climax, he would have been hailed with a shout of delight from his audience, but there was no such outburst. On the contrary, a feeling of awkwardness seemed to prevail among them, and, after looking stealthily at each other, they, with one accord, glanced towards Gerald Hardinge. The expression on Mr. Dunsany's face was especially anxious, and when Mr. Snick stopped speaking, Gerald felt his knee clasped by his friend's hand in protest against any outbreak on his part.

The young man, however, needed no such warning. His lips twitched a little when Mr. Snick made his point, but all sign of emotion had passed away as he asked: "The night was dark, and I think you say you did not recognise the gentleman's face?"

"No," said Mr. Snick; "I could only see that he was a tall man."

"The darkness must have deceived you in that respect too," said Gerald, with an attempt at a smile, "for," turning to the company, "I cannot be considered tall, and yet I was the man who met Miss Pierrepont on the night in question, when this estimable gentleman was good enough to play the spy upon our actions."

"You!" cried Mr. Snick.

"You!" cried Mr. Hayward.

"You!" echoed Mr. Potts, the prompter.

"You been kissing and making love to our leading lady?"

"Yes," said Gerald Hardinge; "yes, Mr. Potts, and making love to her successfully, I am happy to say, for Miss Pierrepont is now my affianced wife."

A SCOTCH FEEING MARKET.

AMONG the more characteristic scenes connected with the rural life of Scotland, and especially the rural life of the north-eastern counties of Scotland, the feeing market holds its own distinctive place. It corresponds with the statute fair of some English counties, and in it, at the two

terms of Whit Sunday and Martinmas, the tenant-farmers and farm-labourers meet to form their six-monthly engagements. Where railways have penetrated, the character of the feeing market has been modified in a slight degree, from the fact that the trains take people early away from the market, and carry them promptly to their homes. It is Burns who has said :

When market nights are wearin' late,
And folk begin to tak' the gate,
While we sit bousin' at the nappy,
And gettin' fou and unco happy.

But where the railway trains run, in place of "taking the gate" on foot, loiteringly, and in small detachments, the market frequenters are all carried off together. This serves to bring the market earlier to a close, and very perceptibly to curtail the noise and uproar that invariably mark its later stages. In other respects the feeing market continues to be the same strange medley of business, holiday-making, and rough dissipation it has been for many years, and that in defiance of all attempts by philanthropists and clergymen to put down the system, or in some way improve it.

The relation between the tenant-farmer and his labourers is of this sort: I take, in the way of example, my friend the tenant of the hill-foot farm, known as Mains of Yawal, who will very fairly represent the class of hard-headed, industrious men to whom he belongs. By habit and custom of long standing in that region, the tenant is always known by the name of his farm. And thus, if one would avoid the suspicion of desiring to degrade him socially in the eyes of his neighbours of the glen, he must address my friend, not by his own proper name and surname, but as "Mains of Yawal," or, if brevity is aimed at, as "Mains," simply. He is a farmer of good medium position, and, apart from his domestic establishment, carries on the operations of the farm by means of six or seven labourers. Two or three drive his horses, in cart and plough; the special function of one trustworthy man is to tend and feed his cattle, and the others do such odd jobs as must be attended to from day to day. They live in a separate apartment in the homestead known as the "bothy," without female society, and doing their own cooking, which is not of an elaborate sort.

They are vigorous, powerful fellows these bothy men, or "boys," as Mains of Yawal is in the habit of styling them; somewhat rough in manner, no doubt, but by no

means either destitute of opinions of their own, or afraid to give expression to them. Coming between them and their master, as a kind of buffer, there is the "working grieve," who is simply a married labourer of good experience, whom Mains provides with a cottage for himself and his family. He takes orders from his master, conveys them to the boys, over whom he exercises a general supervision, and is expected to be careful about the affairs of the farm generally, but is invested with no special powers of independent action.

And thus it is that when the period of the half-yearly feeing market comes round, and the bothy men have got to be re-engaged for another term, or others engaged to take their places, Mains of Yawal himself must come face to face with the boys in discussing and adjusting the rate of wages, and all other disputed points. On the morning of the feeing market day, but not before, Mains will address himself to each of his bothy men in succession, for the purpose of ascertaining whether he is willing to "bide" in his present situation for six months more. The answers may vary from a blunt negative to a qualified and hesitating affirmative; but one thing is certain, that Mains shall be left in no doubt of its being the full intention of every one of the boys to appear in person at the feeing market that day. And, very probably, even those who have returned the most favourable answers to his inquiry have likewise indicated their belief that the feeing market is the fitting place for completing any contemplated transactions between them.

So they come together, farmers and farm-labourers, on the village-green—a representative assemblage of each class. The farmers drive thither in gig or dog-cart, or astride all sorts of steeds, from the thick-set cob, fit for plough or harrow, to the hardy Highland pony. The labourers come trooping in in groups of three, four, or half a dozen in company. They are all dressed in full holiday attire; and many seek to gain additional effect by carrying a stout walking-stick, and assuming a little bit of swagger in their gait. Women are not numerous, as the better class of female servants prefer engaging themselves privately to appearing in the noise and bustle of the feeing market. There is a proportion of these, however, chiefly out-door workers, who dress yet more showily than their male companions, in whose somewhat boisterous society they seem to be very much at

home; and when the little groups of acquaintances meet, their words of mutual recognition and greeting are loud and emphatic. Here and there, about the margin of the market-green, and very handy for all comers, are canvas tents for the sale of refreshments (mainly whisky, let it be said). These have been put up for the occasion by the alehouse-keepers gathered from a radius of half a dozen miles round. They have come to supplement the services of the village publican in the way of providing "entertainment for man and beast," or rather to share the market profits with him; and the village publican will return the compliment by packing up his whisky measures, and other business apparatus, and transporting himself to the other feeing markets in the district, as they successively occur during the fortnight that precedes what is known as the "fitting" term. Near by the tents are abundance of hucksters' stalls for the sale of ginger-bread, confections, and much else meant to tempt the eye or the palate. Here, in the centre of a very dense throng, we find the voluble hardware man in his cart loudly proclaiming his desire to benefit all who can be persuaded to buy his goods at greatly less than prime cost; there stands the professional ballad-singer, with his sheaf of dubious-looking sheets under his arm, and endeavouring to be audible in unmelodious notes, which meet a formidable rivalry in many surrounding noises, not to mention the ear-piercing sounds of the bagpipe blown by a hairy and kilted Highlander in the background. And yet again—strangest sight of all perhaps—we have in the very centre of this Babel of sounds a group of "revival" preachers prosecuting their work. Two or three stand aside, and one has mounted a sort of temporary platform, and is delivering a fervid address, full of solemn adjuration, which is met by words of horrid blasphemy from several half-tipsy men near by. From his white neckcloth we conclude that he is a minister by profession. His appearance indicates that he feels his present position to be anything but comfortable; yet when we begin to think of the folly that would lead any man to attempt preaching in such a scene as that, we cannot help this further reflection, that if the preacher's sense of duty has been strong enough to compel him to brave the insolence of the rude crowd, he has, after all, some claim to our respect too. But he stops, and a broad-shouldered, vigorous-looking layman ascends the plat-

form. He glances over his audience with a firm, self-possessed look, utters the words, "Let us pray," and, taking off his hat, proceeds, in stentorian tones, to offer up an extempore prayer. There are one or two attempts at interruption, but they speedily cease; heads are generally uncovered near the speaker; a few of the noisier men slip away from the place, and by the time the prayer is finished there is a wonderful amount of quiet. The lay preacher at once goes on with an address, in which he manifests an exact knowledge of the habits and mode of life of those to whom he speaks. His style is familiar, though pointed and severe; but it is neither canting nor mawkish. He has caught the ear of an audience even there; and, incongruous as it may seem, his solemn discourse of sin and salvation is listened to with as close attention on the one side, as the coarse buffoonery of the mountebank vendor of hardware, declaiming only ten yards off, is on the other.

But we are concerned with the business done in the feeing market. We have seen Mains of Yawal preparing for the market; let us now look on as he proceeds to accomplish what he has got to do there. Mains stands in the centre of a dense and constantly shifting crowd, with a couple of men by his side, and engaged in negotiation with one of them.

"Nine puu' ten's a heavy wage for a man wi' no charge," urges Mains, speaking to the younger of the two men, to whom he is addressing himself. "Ye'll better be taken't; here's your arles," and he holds out a shilling in his hand to the man.

"It winna du, laird; mak' it the even siller, an' we'll think about it."

By the even siller the young man means the sum of ten pounds. He has asked ten pounds ten shillings as his half-year's wages, and has been offered nine pounds ten shillings. Then Mains and he have an arduous haggle over the duties he is wanted to perform, which are those connected with driving a pair of farm horses, and the rate of wages usually paid for such work. The master loudly declares that the "fee" asked is unreasonably high, and such as he has not been accustomed to pay, and the servant retorts by desiring to know what sort of men he has got at less fee, at the same time very broadly hinting that his own capabilities entitle him to the highest rate of wages going. "Speer" (ask) "at your grievance there," he adds, pointing to the other man, who, after a

short absence, while the negotiations have been going on, has just returned with a younger stripling in tow. It is on the preliminary recommendation of the grieve, who had had some knowledge of the man before, that Mains has been proceeding; and, after an abrupt renewal of his offer, "tak' it or want it," he turns about to commence similar negotiations with the stripling, whom he wishes to engage as "orra man," and concerning whose previous history the grieve can give no information whatever. He has simply stumbled upon him in the crowd, and deeming him, from physical appearances, a "likely loon," has brought him to his master. The man previously in hand has uttered a half-indignant exclamation, and turned to leave; but while Mains and the lad are "argle bargle" in a precisely similar way about work and wages, he returns, judiciously prompted to that course by the grieve, and exclaims: "Weel, ca't nine fifteen, an' I'll refer the croon to yoursel' an' the grieve." This means that the five shillings to complete the ten pounds shall be payable when the term of service is up, but only at the discretion of the master and grieve should they consider the amount fairly earned. Mains of Yawal pronounces this amended offer to be mere "haivers." But at this point in the negotiations he asks his three present companions to accompany him to one of the refreshment tents.

The tent is entered by an irregular sort of doorway at one end, over which is the owner's sign-board, roughly fastened; through an opening at the other end we can see a sort of gipsy fireplace, and, over the wood and peat fire, there is a large metal pot, in which the staple of the dinner supplied (boiled beef and "broth") is cooked. The tent is crowded with farmers and farm-labourers, horse and cattle dealers, and other marketing folks, seated on long wooden seats, and most of those present are occupied in the concluding stages of bargain making, while some have met there to enjoy each other's society and a dram through pure love and friendship. Mains of Yawal calls to a ruddy-cheeked damsel, who aids the master of the tent, to bring "a half-mutchkin;" and we hear similar orders right and left. The din of voices, and the hot vapour from the steaming toddy on the tables, are, to be sure, somewhat trying to our inexperienced sensibilities, but we are not prepared to say that the atmosphere of the tent does not facilitate the adjustment of

contracts and covenants. At any rate, by the time that Mains of Yawal's half-mutchkin of whisky is finished—he distributes it impartially between the men and himself—he has fully engaged his two servants, whom he then dismisses with an intimation of the exact date at which he expects them to enter his service, and his hope that they will turn out as good servants as they have professed themselves to be.

His own particular business over, Mains of Yawal takes a stroll through the market to learn the general run of things affecting his interests, and to meet a friend or two, and then at a reasonable hour mounts his gig and rides home. To the farm-servant, however, the feeing market is much more than a day for the transaction of business. He does not call it a holiday; yet it is a day on which he is bent upon pleasure in a very determined fashion. The number of friends he meets on feeing day is great. Vociferous are the greetings that pass, and voluble the inquiries made as to the health and fortunes of those long separated. The feeling of hospitality is at its zenith, and as it too generally finds expression by the friends who meet entertaining each other under the shade of the canvas tent, the effect of the drink imbibed becomes widely apparent in the various forms of outrageous hilarity, obscene and blasphemous talk, and open quarrelling, with occasional exchange of blows. The later stages of the feeing market are indeed a good deal more stirring than pleasant to the on-looker. Yet when we think of the pitch of frenzy to which raw whisky, often of the fieriest sort, will stir the man who chooses to drink himself drunk therewith, it is in its way rather creditable to these rough farm-labourers that scenes of violence are not more common in the feeing market than they are; the results, as they bear generally on the morality of the people, are confessedly deplorable enough.

While the young men have been engaged with business and whisky, the young women who have been in the market to engage have been walking about in their finery, seeing and being seen. As they pick up, or are picked up, by their male friends, their understood right is to be presented with parcels of "sweeties" from the confection stalls in the first place, and in the next place to be escorted home by such of the chevaliers as are not too far gone in inebriety to be capable of performing that office of gallantry. The close of the feeing market, when the whisky tents are struck,

and the latest loiterers on the market-green stagger off to their distant homes, is a spectacle which the eye of the Christian philanthropist can scarcely regard with complacency.

AN ITALIAN PEASANT PLAY.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

AMONG the population of Bethulia is a pair of betrothed lovers rejoicing in the names of Sileno and Gisbina. They are both warriors of proved valour. The notion of making Gisbina fight, sword in hand and helmet on head, for her country, is evidently taken from the heroines of the poems of romance and chivalry. Ariosto's Bradamante probably furnished the immediate model for Gisbina. As represented at Pon San Pieri, she is tall and long-limbed; wears a tunic to the knee, martial greaves upon her legs, a sword by her side, a tin shield on her arm, and on her head a fireman's helmet surmounting the inevitable curly wig.

After a recapitulation by the lovers of the circumstances which threaten Israel with destruction, they conclude a rather long scene as follows :

SILENO. Dearest come! All fear eschew!

GISBINA (very loud). A fig for fear! I'd have you know
My heart with martial fire doth glow,
And I can fight as well as you.*

By-and-bye Holofernes, with Achior, a general of the Ammonites, and other officers, is reconnoitring in the neighbourhood of the city of Cilicia. And there is brought to him a shepherd whose errand to the army is to implore protection for his family and his flocks. This "pastore" is the comic character of the drama. He is dressed in a wide-flapping coat, kncc-breeches, coarse blue stockings, a red waistcoat, and a huge hat turned up in front with a bunch of flowers. He bears a shepherd's crook in his hand, and exhibits, to the uproarious delight of the audience, the most extravagant terror and amazement at sight of Holofernes. An amazement, be it remarked, not wholly unjustified by the aspect of that champion, who has a terrible bushy black beard, rolls his eyes beneath their thickly painted brows, and bears a general resemblance to the sign of the Saracen's Head.

The pastore is interrogated as to his religious views, which prove to be limited.

* *Sil.* Vieni, oh cara, e nell' obbligo
Si deponga ogni timore!

Gis. Che temenza! Ho sempre il cuore
Di guerriera, e pugno anch' io!

He is asked whether he knows Nabuco and answers, humbly, "No, signori." "Aha!" says Shem; "well, he is the real divinity. Adore him!" "Certainly," answers the pastore; and, moreover, undertakes to inform his friends and neighbours of their duty in this matter. Whereupon he is set at liberty, and promised every safety and protection.

After this there is an infinity of tedious scenes between Holofernes and his party on the one hand, and the Israelitish warriors and their friends on the other. Holofernes quarrels with Achior for "speaking up" in favour of the Jews, and has him bound to a tree, and left in the wilderness to perish.

Achior is invariably called by the spectators around me Achilles. And, indeed, not until I was favoured with a sight of the manuscript was I sure that it was not the Grecian hero who was represented. Since we had Shem and Amurath at the siege of Bethulia, one did not altogether refuse to believe that Achilles might have been there also!

But a more interesting spectacle is presently afforded by the interior of the Temple at Bethulia, with King Ozias, and the high-priest, and the populace, worshipping. They sing a sort of psalm in chorus, which is only welcome as being a change from the intolerable monotony of the chanting. In itself it is not melodious. And here must be noted another instance of the spirit of conventionality before alluded to.

None of the performers attempted to conduct themselves as they would have done in real life. There was no trace of imitation of nature; of trying (however uncouthly) to behave like real men and women. But there was a very evident attempt to imitate the conventionalities of the opera stage. They divided themselves into two parties, one left and one right, just as the chorus-singers do. They knelt on one knee (carefully choosing the knee next the audience), and sawed the air with their arms, with the unanimity only seen in stage crowds. They sang and moved at the audience, and were never unconscious of the footlights for one moment. Doubtless every one of these peasant actors was in the habit of attending the solemnities of his own church, and many of behaving with respect and devoutness on such occasions. But it had never entered into their heads that, in representing the worship of the Jews in their Temple, they should try to seem to be really pray-

ing. No; there were rules and precedents for the conduct of such a stage scene, and these were to be followed. In this, as in all the rest, the contrast between the Italian and Tyrolese peasant players was very striking.

To the assembled worshippers enters Judith, blazing with tinfoil, and otherwise radiant, and announces her intention of delivering her country. She does not reveal her plan, but recommends the Israelites to pray fervently for its success, which they promise to do, and are evidently encouraged by her hopeful demeanour. They break forth into enthusiastic compliments about her beauty and the brilliancy of her appearance. And when I state that her attire consists of a red damask gown cut in the same fashion as her black one, trimmed in an open-jam-tart pattern down the front with gilt paper, a mass of coloured beads round her throat, a crown stuck all over with pieces of red, blue, yellow, and white glass (from beneath which hangs the wig, inflexibly curly as ever), and an extra coating of raddle on the cheeks, it will be readily understood that Ozias and the high-priest should be immensely struck by so dazzling an apparition.

I must not dwell on minor incidents—such as the shepherd's possession of a miraculous ointment, prepared by himself from simples, by means of which he instantaneously cures Gisbina of a terrific wound inflicted by an Assyrian scimitar; or the introduction on to the scene of a vivandière dressed in the Italian colours, who provides refreshment for Nabuchodonosor's army, and is much admired by the junior officers—but must come at once to the grand catastrophe.

Judith gains admission to the camp of Holofernes, fascinates him at a glance, and is treated to a banquet served on a little round table about the size of a Cheshire cheese, and apparently consisting (the banquet, not the table) of three empty bottles, several ditto glass tumblers, and one flask containing wine. There is nothing whatever to eat; which circumstance (combined with the intoxication of his passion for *la bella Giuditta*) may account for the fact that Holofernes becomes very drunk in the course of the banquet. For the three empty bottles and the one full flask could hardly have produced this result under ordinary conditions, one would fancy. Howbeit, a profound somnolency falls upon the great captain. He hastily arranges with Judith that the ceremony of their marriage shall take place with great pomp at an early

hour on the following morning, dismisses his army (the literal stage directions in the manuscript are, "Amurath, Shem, and the army go off"), and throws himself on his bed in the tent, carefully drawing the curtains behind him.

After a brief pause, *la bella Giuditta* returns on tip-toe. She takes the sword which is hanging by the side of the tent, expresses a little natural repugnance to the deed she is about to do, overcomes this as a despicable weakness, and rushes upon the tent. The curtains are withdrawn, and reveal a stuffed figure, representing, with a good deal of revolting detail, Holofernes, who has just been decapitated. The stuffed figure is made to jump and writhe convulsively, whilst Judith triumphantly rushes off with its head! which head may be vividly imagined by such of my readers as have seen the grotesque masks in a Christmas pantomime.

At this point the audience displayed, I am sorry to say, a good deal of ferocity; whooping with delight at the extremely horrible, though ludicrous, spectacle of the headless Holofernes, and encouraging Judith with shouts and yells partly savage and partly derisive.

This scene was, of course, the climax of the play. There was a fifth and last act, wherein Judith appeared in a triumphal car, bearing aloft the Saracen's Head, stuck upon a spear, and receiving the fervent congratulations of the liberated Hebrews. the whole concluding with a repetition of the hymn in the Temple, sung by the entire strength of the company, including, I doubt not, our friend Leoferne, behind the scenes. But the true culmination of interest was attained when the tyrant was decapitated.

For real comicality, and a pathos which panting burlesque writers toil after in vain, I think, however, that the *Maggio* of Santa Oliva triumphantly bears away the palm from all competitors in the same line. I scarcely hope to find implicit credence when I state that wheresoever I have done into verse any snatches from this composition, I have, whilst preserving the measure and the rhyme, rendered the phrases literally, and that my translation falls far short of the original in genuine absurdity. Nevertheless, such is the unvarnished truth.

The incidents in this *Maggio* are of so stupendous, nay, miraculous a nature, so numerous, and extending over so long a series of years, as to preclude my attempting to give any but the very faintest out-

line of the plot. An individual denominated Lacché (lackey) appears before the curtain, and speaks a brief prologue, to the effect that the audience are now to prepare themselves to witness the most admirable and wonderful adventures gone through by Saint Oliva, who was a great devotee of the Madonna, and proved to be specially under her holy protection. "Of the Emperor Julien this saint was the daughter, and wife, with great affection, of the King of Castile." Ask not, oh, reader, "What emperor? Which King of Castile?" No further elucidation, either historical, geographical, or chronological, is vouchsafed on these points throughout the play. Only it may be mentioned that the emperor was a Christian, and that there was a pope in his days, of whom the monarch sought counsel.

The lackey withdraws, and the actors appear on the scene. The emperor confides to a faithful "baron" that he finds himself in a somewhat difficult position. His late adored spouse is dead. "Come, calm yourself," observes the baron, parenthetically. "In your position you will have no difficulty in finding another." And he is determined, when he marries again, as he is resolved to do for the good of his kingdom, to wed no lady inferior to the deceased in beauty and virtue. A combination of both, such as the late empress exhibited, he can nowhere find. Especially, his wife was remarkable for the exquisite symmetry of her hands. He has sought far and wide, but such hands, together with such exalted Christian piety and general fascination, are only discovered in his sole daughter Oliva. Her accordingly he intends to marry, and is only waiting until the dispensation he has sent to demand shall be accorded by his holiness the pope. It will be, the emperor admits, a troublesome job (*una cosa faticosa*) to get the dispensation, but he expresses no doubt of ultimately succeeding.

Oliva, however, who is singing a canticle to the Virgin with her maid when the proposition is broached to her, views the matter with the horror and amazement which one would expect from a young lady so excellently brought up. Nothing will induce her to yield to so unheard-of a proposal. And after various long colloquies with her father and with persons about the court, she resolves to cut off her own hands, in the hope that this fatal attraction once removed, the emperor may abandon his scheme. How she accomplishes the

feat of cutting off both her hands there is nothing to show. The task would be one beyond the powers of any ordinary mortal, but Oliva is a saint, and behaves as such. But the result of this heroic sacrifice is to make her father furiously angry. He turns her out in her helpless condition into the wilderness full of carnivorous beasts, which wilderness appears to be in strange and uncomfortable proximity to the emperor's capital city, and leaves her there to be devoured.

This dreadful fate does not, of course, overtake her. She is rescued by the huntsmen of the King of Brittany, and is finally hired by that monarch as nursemaid to his little boy, although a nursemaid without hands would seem to be an unprofitable kind of servant. Indeed, the Queen of Brittany's maternal instincts tell her so much, and she makes a little objection to the engagement of the stranger maiden. But the queen is won over by the beauty and sweetness of Oliva's countenance, and consents to intrust her baby to the care of that damsel. Oliva steadfastly refuses to state who she is, and where she comes from, and under these hopeful circumstances the little victim is placed in her arms.

A wicked courtier (also a baron like the confidant of the emperor) makes love to Oliva. She repulses him indignantly. He is surprised at the disdain of a servant-girl, tells her she doesn't know what a great and noble signore he is; gives her a push (*sic*) by way of proving his nobleness, and what might have been anticipated happens: the wretched baby tumbles down on to the ground, and, Oliva being unable to pick him up, remains there.

A learned doctor, called in by the distracted parents, makes an exquisite speech, in which he states that in the course of his studies he has read and pondered the medical works of "Aristotle, Plato, Asclepias (*Æsculapius*), Socrates, Galen, Hippocrates, Varro, Prutarcho (*Plutarch*), Pomerio, Aveteo, and Carivaccio!" And that he has their apharisms (*aphorisms*) by heart. All this, however, profits nothing; and despite the apharisms, the baby dies, and Oliva is cast forth with execration into the wilderness once more, with the fervently expressed hope on the part of the king and queen that she may speedily be devoured.

Nothing of the sort occurs. The Madonna presently appears to Oliva in person, and—apparently as a reward for having

smashed the baby—miraculously causes her hands to be restored to her more beautiful than ever.

Then follows a wondrous and protracted chain of events. Oliva is again and again rescued from impending death. Once she is thrown into the sea in a chest full of holes, which floats on the stormy ocean as well as the most seaworthy of ships, and brings Oliva safely to shore. Her enemies are extraordinarily numerous and ferocious, but of course they cannot prevail against the protection of the Madonna. Amongst other incidents in her extremely chequered career, Oliva marries the King of Castile, becomes the mother of a hopeful son, and is condemned to death by her husband, who is deceived by the fiendish machinations of his mother the queen-dowager. This old lady—a somewhat forcible specimen of the typical mother-in-law—hates the young queen for no particular reason except that she is her son's wife. She has vainly tried to prevent the match, and urged upon the king that he is doing an imprudent thing in marrying an utter stranger (for Oliva still preserves her incognito).

Son, your mind don't let her blandish;
Reasons I could give you many.
Wed a girl without a penny!
And, besides, she's quite outlandish!

This last touch ("à forestiera") is intensely Italian.

After a long lapse of years crowded with amazing adventures, the King of Castile, who supposes himself to be a widower, and now regrets his lost Oliva (having discovered her innocence), goes to Rome to meet the emperor, who likewise believes Oliva to be dead years ago. The King of Castile, on learning the treachery which destroyed his wife, had taken the strong measure of burning his mother alive as a punishment for her iniquities. In course of time he is troubled by scruples as to whether his warmth of temper may not have hurried him a little too far. To burn one's own mother alive is perhaps rather harsher than is consistent with filial virtue. So the King of Castile goes to Rome to seek for absolution from the pope. And here the author leaves us in disagreeable uncertainty as to whether the Emperor Giuliano was reigning in Rome (together with the pope—a circumstance which might be worth considering in the present state of affairs in the Peninsula), or whether he too had arrived there as a visitor. The former seems to be the real state of the case, for the emperor receives

and welcomes the King of Castile in the manner of a host doing the honours of his own house. But be this as it may, the following verses will give an idea of the style of colloquy between the two potentates, and afford a pleasing picture of the familiar moments of the great:

EMPEROR. Was your journey fair and fine, sir?

KING. Very.

EMP. Feel you appetite?

KING. Well, rather.

EMP. Lo, I you invite!

KING. What to do?

EMP. Good sooth, to dine, sir!

(Enter a servant in great haste.)

EMP. How! What means this hasty runner,
Flurried mien, and foot unsteady?

SERV. Majesty, the dinner's ready!

EMP. Will you come, sire?

KING. Too much honour!

After numerous vicissitudes Santa Oliva is brought into the presence of her husband and father, who both have deemed her dead. Upon their first sight of her follows a sort of duct, which for sheer, solid, unconscious absurdity, I have never seen surpassed. The father and husband alternate breathless sentences as follows:

EMP. 'Tis not she! Or do I see her?

KING. Do I see her? Is it she?

EMP. Yes! No! Yes! It cannot be!

KING. No! And yet! How can it be her?

Finally, of course, all is made clear. The saint is restored to her loving spouse (who, we trust, is absolved for the peccadillo of roasting the queen-dowager in a hasty moment) and to her imperial papa, now quite a reformed character, and on the best possible terms with his holiness the pope. Rejoicings are commanded on a magnificent scale. All the kind Christians who have befriended Saint Oliva in her troubles are amply rewarded. And the emperor, in the joy of his heart, breaks out into vast schemes for the popular rejoicings, which have quite an Oriental flavour in their unlimited and impossible hugeness. A deputation of nobles, coming to congratulate him on his newly-recovered domestic felicity, is received with so much warmth and affability as apparently to overwhelm them altogether. At least I can only thus account for the comparative feebleness of their reply, ending in almost an anti-climax:

O dread king, we thank you duly
For your great magnificence,
And we all in consequence
Shall remain obliged most truly.

But the emperor's final speech rises once more into real enthusiasm. He speaks thus:

Tenor, bass, and eke soprano,
 We command three days to sing,
 With instruments, both wind and string,
 The Te Deum Ambrosiano.
 Also let a dining-table,
 Full a mile square in extension,
 Be prepared. And pay attention
 To spread it amply as you're able!
 No one's absence will I pardon.
 I expect each noble cit
 About my festive board to sit,
 And all assemble in the garden.

The notion of having a supper-table spread in one's garden is Italian and local. But the idea of inviting indiscriminately "each noble cit" to partake of unlimited food at a board "full a mile square in extension," belongs to the lofty realms of poetry, in which the mind bursts the fetters of fact, and where there is nothing to pay.

The foregoing is an imperfect account—imperfect, owing to the limits of time and space, which are more regarded by an English editor than by a Pon-San-Picrian author—but a perfectly faithful one, as far as it goes, of the Mystery or Miracle Play as it has come to exist in rural Italy—as it has come to exist by a kind of "natural selection," all the features of a religious drama which are not consonant to the nature of the people having been eliminated in process of time. Had there been any ecclesiastical supervision—the presence even of a parish curé—we may suppose that a little more reverence and a little less ignorance would have been exhibited in the performance. But, be it observed, I say expressly, "a little."

THE PRAYERS.

STILL as glass was the ocean,
 In a calm light and pale,
 A hundred ships lay on it,
 Each with a windless sail.

A hundred skippers were fretting,
 Each search'd the sea and the skies,
 Each for a wind was praying,
 But never a wind would rise.

The prayers rose up to Heaven,
 In English, German, Greek,
 Each of the hundred skippers
 In his own tongue did speak.

Each of the hundred skippers,
 Loath in the calm to stay,
 Wanted the wind to waken,
 To blow him on his way.

Each in his own direction
 Would have his good ship blown,
 And a hundred winds were wanted
 If each was to get his own.

Each on the deck was pacing
 With discontented mind,
 And when the wind would come not,
 All thought the Lord unkind.

Poor fools! Had He granted their wishes
 Sad were the end to see!
 The hundred winds would have hurled them
 To the bottom of the sea.

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

FIVE FLEET-STREET TAVERNS.

THROUGH a narrow portal, a few doors north-east of Temple Bar, over which a gilt bird proudly struts, have entered many generations of hungry Englishmen. There is no habitué of the Cock Tavern in Fleet-street who has not at some period or another of his prandial existence been informed of the extreme antiquity of that ancient dining place. As you nibbled up the last green leaf of your salad, or drained with a lingering plaintiveness the last drop in your tankard, the head-waiter, after gently correcting the fire, or adjusting the burnished kettle, was in the habit of mitigating the painfulness of Rabelais's "mauvais quart d'heure," by gravely producing a round snuff-box, containing a farthing-token of the house at the time of the Plague, and with it a greasy volume of Pepys, thumb'd black by Templars and inky-handed lawyers' clerks, alluding to the following advertisement of the period, watching you with benignant condescension as you read words that, though two hundred years old, seem just written:

"This is to certify that the master of the Cock and Bottle, commonly called the Cock Alehouse at Temple Bar, hath dismissed his servants and shut up his house for this long vacation, intending, God willing, to return at Michaelmas next, so that all persons whatsoever who may have any accounts with the said master, or farthings belonging to the said house" (the plump waiter watched your face as you came to a certain line, and pushed the venerated box nearer your plate) "are desired to repair thither before the 8th of this instant, and they shall receive satisfaction."

At this time the fatal red cross was to be seen on thousands of barred-up doors, and according to that amiable and trustworthy gentleman, Mr. Evelyn (then a commissioner for the cure of the sick and wounded in the Dutch war), there were then dying in London of the plague about ten thousand persons a week; he writes, August the 7th, 1665: "I went all along the City and suburbs from Kent-street to St. James's, a dismal passage and dangerous to see so many coffins exposed in the streets, now

thin of people. The shops shut up and all in mournful silence, not knowing whose turn might be next." All who could afford it were flying from London, huge pits for the dead were digging in Bunhill Fields. Dying people, mad with the disease, were occasionally met in the suburban streets, and at stated hours the doleful dead-carts came round to collect the dead. In due time, however, the scourge abated, and the landlord of the Cock returned, re-lit his fires in his rusty grates, scoured bright his gridirons, and that old carved Jacobean mantelpiece, still over the Fleet-street fireplace, shone cheerily again in the dancing flame.

On April the 23rd, 1668 (the year after the Dutch were in the Medway), we find Pepys, then a busy, well-to-do, important man, in court and in city, being Clerk of the Acts of the Navy, and living in some style in Seething-lane, Tower-street, disporting himself at the Cock Alehouse in Fleet-street. Mr. Pepys, then only thirty-six, was fond of music, the theatres, and the company of pretty actresses—sometimes, indeed, rousing the jealousy of Mrs. Pepys—and seldom forgot in his delightful diary to note all "great beauties" and "fine ladies" he met. He was at this time very partial to the society of Mrs. Knipp, an actress of the King's House, a pretty, "excellent, mad-humoured thing," who sang divinely, and visited frequently at Seething-lane, in spite of that ill-natured fellow, that "ill, melancholy, jealous-looking" churl, her husband. "Dapper Dicky," Knipp, it appears, used to playfully call Mr. Samuel Pepys, while he named her "Barbary Allen," after a little Scotch song, in which the artful and somewhat dangerous syren excelled. Bustling Pepys worked hard in his office, and had been personally thanked and praised for his diligence and fidelity by the king and the Duke of York. Anxious not to overstretch the bow, he had laid down, March 10th, 1666, the following very sensible rule of life: "The truth is, I do indulge myself a little more in pleasure, knowing that this is the proper age of my life to do it, and out of my observation that most men that do thrive in the world do forget to take pleasure during the time that they are getting their estate, but reserve that till they have got one, and then it is too late for them to enjoy it." After this secret peep at the short-hand diary of the busy man at the Admiralty, we can follow him through Temple Bar, and understand better the thoroughness of his enjoyment.

On April 23rd, 1668, then (in his wife's absence apparently), Pepys invites a Mrs. Pierce, her daughter, a Mrs. Foster, and the irresistible Knipp, to dinner at noon in Seething-lane, and after that takes them to see the crown jewels at the Tower (not yet snatched at by Blood) "which I myself," he says, in his quaint, simple way, "never saw before, and I mightily pleased with it." Then comes the bit we want. "Thence by water to the Temple, and there to the Cock Alehouse, and drank and eat a lobster, and sang, and mightily merry, to almost night. I carried Mrs. Pierce home, and then Knipp and I to the Temple again, and took boat, it being darkish, and to Fox Hall (laid out in 1661), it being now night, and a bonfire burning at Lambeth for the king's coronation day. And there she and I drank; and so back, and led her home, it being now ten at night, and I got a link, and, walking towards home, just at the entrance into the ruins in St. Dunstan's (where the Great Fire stopped), I was met by two rogues with clubs, who came towards us. So I went back and walked home, quite round by the wall, and got well home and to bed weary, pleased with my day's pleasure, but yet displeased at my expense and time I lose." We can, perhaps, hardly wonder that at last Mrs. Pepys grew dismally jealous (January 12, 1669), and, as Mr. Pepys lay in bed, opened the curtains, and threatened to pinch him with the red-hot tongs, which effective weapon, however, she was eventually persuaded to lay amicably down.

Tennyson's verses on Will Waterproof, a plump head-waiter at the Cock, long since dead, has made the Fleet-street hostelry known to thousands who have never trod its sawdust-strewn floor. In early days, when the then unknown poet dwelt in lofty chambers up behind the balustraded parapet of No. 57, Lincoln's-inn-fields (west side), he used to resort to the Cock for his quiet five o'clock dinner, and, after a pint of the special port, he probably wrote those verses on Will. The humour in some of them, it must be allowed, is forced, but how graceful and thoughtful are the choicest lines such as—

And hence that halo lives about
The waiter's hands that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.

And again :

But whither would my fancy go?
How out of places he makes
The violet of a legend blow
Among the chops and steaks.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone,
We know not what we know,
But for my pleasant hour 'tis gone,
'Tis gone, and let it go.

An old frequenter of the Cock tells us that he remembers when the whole room was lined with carved wainscoting, and the bar hung with silver cups, the property of special customers from the Temple opposite.

The door of the Rainbow reminds us what an outcry there was on the first introduction into England of that pleasant and harmless Arabian drink, coffee. Its weaker and innocent Chinese brother, tea, secured a footing amongst us with far less trouble. The Rainbow, near the Inner Temple gate, as Mr. Timbs proves clearly, was the second coffee-house opened in London. Lord Bacon, in his *Sylva Sylvarum* (James the First), mentions coffee as a Turkish drink, made from a soot-black, scented berry, which the Turks grind into a powder, and drink in boiling hot water, to comfort the brain and heart, and assist digestion. Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621, in the same reign, speaks of Turkish coffee-houses. In 1632, Sir Henry Blount, who wrote a book of travels in the Levant, mentions Turkish coffee with praise. Evelyn describes drinking it at college in the rooms of a Levant friend, and Antony Wood tells us that in 1650 (ten years before the Restoration), a Levant Jew opened a coffee-house at Oxford. Two years later, Pasqua Rosee, a Ragusan servant of Mr. Edwards, a Turkey merchant, and Bowman a coachman, opened the first coffee-house in London in George Yard, Lombard-street. Rosee advertised coffee as a berry grown only in the Arabian deserts, and a drink as used generally throughout all the grand seigneur's dominions. A simple, innocent thing, he called it; mighty good to help digestion; it quickened the spirits, suppressed fumes, cured the gout, dropsy, and scurvy, and was an excellent remedy, according to Rosee, for the spleen and hypochondria, the steam was efficacious for sore eyes, and the use of it made the skin clear and white. About 1656, Mr. Farr, a barber, who had perhaps been in the Levant, opened the second coffee-house nearly opposite the Cock, and Sir Henry Blount, the Levant traveller, became one of his patrons and frequent visitors. There seems at first to have been a foolish notion among coffee drinkers that the coffee should be taken scalding hot, and its enemies naturally made great fun of the rueful faces of the suffering enthusiasts.

The squib writers of the day ridiculed the broken English of Rosee and his partners, and their quack praises of the new drink, which was black as a coal, and looked like physic. But coffee was not to be laughed down, and a satirist soon had to confess that it lessened drunkenness.

And now, alas! the drench has credit got,
And he's no gentleman that drinks it not.

The coffee-house keepers seem the first to have tried to institute fines for swearing, and they allowed no wagers to exceed five shillings. The coffee-house walls were often hung with cases containing popular pills, elixirs, and perfumes, and scurrilous Ned Ward (1679) compares a coffee-house so adorned to the consulting-room of a quack doctor. The vintners soon grew alarmed at the growing popularity of coffee, and did their best to hinder its sale. Coffee was said to be deleterious in the highest degree, and it was prophesied that the children of coffee drinkers would prove apes and pigmies. Those who remembered the stalwart days of Ben Jonson, when men drank beer or canary, lamented the degeneracy of the age, and described the coffee-house keepers as laughing to themselves at their success till they could hardly pour out the sooty broth, the "loathsome potion" which had taken the place of "the vine's pure blood." These denouncers of coffee were the conservatives of those days. Farr prospered, but he seems to have been rather careless about his flues, and the pungent scorched smell of the coffee roasting, and the occasional setting on fire of his chimneys, vexed his envious neighbours at the Devil (now Child's bank). He was accordingly proceeded against as a nuisance at a presentment at St. Dunstan's, December the 21st, 1657, that is, a year after he had set up. The indictment ran:

"We present James Farr, barber, for making and selling of a drink called coffee, whereby in making the same he annoyeth his neighbours by evil smells, and for keeping of fire for the most part night and day, whereby his chimney and chamber hath been set on fire, to the great danger and affrightment of his neighbours."

Farr was, however, not to be turned out so easily. He attended to his chimneys, and repressed the fumes of the coffee roasting. The Devil no doubt grew more friendly; and after all the vintners might as well have complained of the smell of scorched hair at a barber's, or the cloying vapours from a perfumer's; so Farr

went on shaving and making coffee boldly, and prospered. He issued tokens in 1666, one of which still exists in the celebrated Beaufoy collection at the Guildhall. The sign was an old one; for it appears on the frontispiece of a History of England, 1636 (Charles the First). The Rainbow had a bookseller's shop facing Fleet-street then, and a stall of the same kind existed there the year of the Great Fire, which had all but roasted poor Farr's coffee and himself too. The barber had a very narrow shave indeed when the Temple caught fire, and the lawyer's parchments began to frizzle and hiss like so many scorched snakes. Farr had much to endure. In 1660, the restored proof of Divine Right laid a duty of fourpence on every gallon of coffee made and sold. In 1668, Charles had required all coffee-houses to be licensed. In 1675, in a rage at some Whig sedition of the day, the king issued a proclamation to shut up all coffee-houses as chattering seminaries of treason; but in a few days (luckily for the persecuted barber), the king found he had gone too far, and suspended the tyrannical and impossible proclamation. In the Spectator (Addison), No. 16, there is an allusion to the Rainbow as a fashionable resort. "I have received a letter," says the amiable censor of manners, "desiring me to be very satirical upon the little muff that is now in fashion; another informs me of a pair of silver garters buckled below the knee that have been lately seen at the Rainbow Coffee-House in Fleet-street."

About 1780, according to Mr. Timbs, the Rainbow was kept by Alexander Moncrieff, the grandfather of the author of Tom and Jerry. It was a different place then; snugger, and less grand—more wainscoting, less Pompeian decoration—cosier, though less resplendent with the silver glitter of plate and the golden glow of gas. There was a lofty bay window at the south end of the coffee-room, a harbour of refuge, with a look-out into the Temple, for the old benchers. A glazed partition alone separated the apartment from the kitchen, so that the cheering frizzle of chops and the hissing of sausages was not be altogether unheard. Some years since the old rooms were cleared into one large hall, and the old Spartan severity of dark wainscots and stable-stall partitions have now disappeared.

The Fleet-street taverns and coffee-houses seem to have been, originally, the inner part of houses, the fronts of which

were occupied by other trades that required external shop windows. Dick's, which derives its name from one Richard Turner, who took the house in 1680 (Charles the Second), like the Rainbow, was occupied in front by a bookseller. It was the printing office, according to the best authority, of Richard Tottel, law printer and publisher of Edward the Sixth, Mary, and Elizabeth, who lived at Nos. 7 and 8, at the Hand and Starre, Fleet-street. No. 7 was afterwards occupied by Jaggard and Joel Stephens, law printers in the reign of the first three Georges; and Messrs. Butterworth, the present occupiers (such a stable and firm-set country is ours), possess the original leases from the time of Henry the Eighth to their own accession.

In 1737 (George the Second), the frequenters of Dick's were up in arms about the Coffee-House, a dramatic piece written by the Reverend James Miller, and performed at Drury Lane Theatre; Kitty Clive and Colley Cibber's son taking the two important parts. This satirical comedietta, a modification of a piece by J. B. Rousseau, was supposed, by the hot-blooded Templars who frequented the favourite Fleet-street house, to be intended to maliciously ridicule and slander Mrs. Yarrow, the landlady of the house, and her daughter, the belle and toast of Hare-court and King's Bench-walk, and the young beaux of the sword and pen damned it accordingly, and threatened the sarcastic author, in spite of his cassock. The dramatis personæ in this unlucky piece were a scrivener, an officer, a gentleman of the Temple (Kitty's lover), a poet, a comedian, a politician, a foxhunter, a solemn beau, a pert beau, two gamblers, a boy of the coffee-house, the mistress of the coffee-house, and her daughter. The play, which is by no means devoid of wit and character, gives one an excellent picture of the coffee-houses of Hogarth's early time. The second scene shows us the widow at the bar, crowned with its punch-bowls and glasses, flirting with two beaux. At one table two gamblers are wrangling over backgammon; a pragmatical poet is sitting conning verses, with pen, ink, and paper before him; a scrivener and politician is smoking, and, with a paper in his hand, discussing with excitement the tremendous news that the grand vizier is marching fast with two hundred thousand men to besiege Belgrade; while a foxhunter, in boots and spurs, is extended in plethoric sleep. Presently one of the widow's

beaux adjusts himself in the glass, combs his wig, and denounces his peruke-maker, while his companion laments the loss of Farinelli, who has been engaged in Spain, while the new singer refuses to come for less than a thousand a year more than Farinelli, the fashionable idol whom Hogarth frequently ridiculed. The dogmatic politician complaining of the players frequenting the house, the landlady gets angry, and rails at him soundly.

"You come here," she says, in her shrillest voice, "and hold your paper in your hand for an hour, and disturb the whole company with your politics, and call for pen, ink, paper, and wax, beg a pipe of tobacco, burn out half a candle" (they used wax candles at coffee-houses), "eat half a pound of sugar, and then go away and pay twopence for a dish of coffee. I should soon shut up my doors if I had not some other good people to make amends for what I lose by such as you, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cries the pert beau, in the fashionable slang of the day; "smoke him, smoke him."

The fox-hunter then awaking with a stupendous yawn, boasts that he has been drinking all day, from six A.M. to that moment, past nine P.M.; with his friends, he had emptied twenty-five bottles of claret, and had now come to drink a bottle of citron to drive away the fumes of the wine. "The world declines greatly," says the toper. "I keep up a little of the old English spirit, but I must go like the rest in time. However, I can bear a tight tug or two more, little Cibber. 'Tisn't a five-bar gate shall stop me, nor a bumper or two knock me under the table, nor a brisk young lass throw me out in the chase."

By-and-bye, in the mother's absence, pretty, lively, coquettish Kitty (by no means ill drawn) comes into the bar, and chatters pleasantly enough.

"Lah!" says the toast of the Inner Temple, "how pure it is to sit here, and have all the fine gentlemen crowding about one, one saying this, and another saying that; one doing one pretty little thing, another another pretty thing. Lah! I don't wonder mother loves it; I wish some of them would come in now, with all my soul. Here, Thomas, what's at the fire there; is everything in order? The gentlemen will be coming from the tavern presently. Make some fresh coffee, d'ye hear, booby, and a pot of the fine tea with the hard name, that mother keeps for her own drinking, for, by the stars, I'll have the

best of everything, Mrs. Kitty. And why not, Madam Saucebox? Oh! here comes somebody. Your servant, sir, your servant, gentlemen. Will ye please to drink anything, gentlemen—fresh coffee, tea, chocolate, or a dram of anything this evening, gentlemen."

Boy.—"Madam, you forget we must not sell drams."

Kitty.—"Hold your tongue, booby. I'll sell ratsbane if I please."

She then scolds the boy for being clumsy and slow, and comes from behind the bar with all her pretty airs and graces, like the chocolatiere in the famous Dresden picture, to serve the gentlemen herself, upon which the modish poet says with ridiculous gallantry:

"Madam, you bring ten thousand blushes into my face to see those fair hands, which should be only employed in sacred rites, profaned by ministering coffee to us."

The other beau orders a pinch of snuff, which she brings, upon which he kisses her, and she curtsies and thanks him naively. Then Gaywood, the officer, begins to rattle out an account of his night's adventures, just such as Hogarth has painted in his Covent Garden scene. Two or three of his friends had been chased into a tavern merely for cracking a few street lamps and two or three watchmen's heads; they were pursued by a whole army of watchmen. The rakes treated the noisy fellows to glass after glass till they forgot what they came for, full to blows among themselves, and drubbed each other heartily, upon which the constable, who was drunk-est of all, carried the watchmen to the round-house for disturbing the public peace. Soon after this narrative, Cibber (who represented himself) comes in, having won one hundred pounds of the scrivener at piquet and cribbage. A sham quarrel is then got up, and a sham fight with swords, which ends in Cibber being apparently seriously wounded by the scrivener.

"A chair, directly," calls out one of the characters.

In comes a sedan, Cibber is bundled into it, a porter runs for a constable, and the door is secured. By this stratagem the widow, to prevent being sent to the round-house, signs a contract surrendering Kitty to her lover, who has contrived the scheme. He appears of course at the right moment, and every one is happy ever afterwards.

Owing to the charge of slander in this piece the author wrote a defence of himself,

showing that all the supposed personal allusions were from Rousseau and the French. He had never entered Dick's coffee-house but once for ten years previous, and had merely made the scene of his play *Temple Bar* because, as "the centre of the town," that was the most likely place for so many different characters to meet. In Rousseau's play the landlady of the coffee-house was a widow. Unluckily for poor Miller (whether honest or not in this apology), the play appeared with a well-executed frontispiece, the background of which was taken from the coffee-room at Dick's. It represents a wainscoted room, with low-backed seats, and a high southern window, through which trees are visible. A brass sconce with four wax candles hangs from the ceiling. This selection of the scene the Reverend Miller still maintained to be entirely accidental, but the Templars, now more furious than ever, swore eternal vengeance against all that the reverend gentleman should ever write. He did, however, anonymously translate Voltaire's *Mahomet* for Garrick, and died during its success. The edition of the unlucky *Coffee-House*, printed for Mr. Watts, Wild-court, Lincoln's-inn-fields, contains an advertisement of "Fifty-one New Fables, in Verse (invented for the Amusement of His Highness, William Duke of Cumberland, by Mr. Gay), Third Edition." It was the indifference of the court to these charming fables, written for the young duke, as yet unconscious of even the existence of such a place as Culloden, which drove Gay to exert his genius in a fresh direction, and to write the *Beggars' Opera*, which at once raised him to the highest pinnacle of popularity.

A sadder event, and one relating to far a greater man indeed than Miller, also took place at Dick's. In December, 1763, the poet Cowper, then a student in the Inner Temple, aged thirty-four, was appointed Clerk of the Journals of the House of Lords. Always delicate in health, indolent, shy, exquisitely sensitive, and with a strong predisposition to insanity, the dread of having to perform public duties, before an arena of criticising noblemen, at once disturbed the balance of his morbid brain. In the August previous Cowper had written to his favourite cousin, Lady Hesketh, describing himself as unlike other people, and unfitted for life. His madness broke out one morning at Dick's. His own account of his feelings is painfully interesting. "At breakfast," he says, "I read the newspaper, and in it a letter, which the further

I perused it the more closely engaged my attention. I cannot now recollect the purport of it; but before I had finished it, it appeared demonstratively true to me that it was a libel or satire upon me. The author appeared to be acquainted with my purpose of self-destruction, and to have written that letter on purpose to secure and hasten the execution of it. My mind probably at this time began to be disordered; however it was, I was certainly given to a strong delusion. I said within myself, 'Your cruelty shall be gratified, you shall have your revenge,' and flinging down the paper in a fit of strong passion, I rushed hastily out of the room, directing my way towards the fields, where I intended to find some lane to die in, or if not, determined to poison myself in a ditch, when I could meet with one sufficiently retired." This paroxysm ended in Cowper trying to hang himself; the rope breaking, he went down the Thames, to the Custom House Quay, and there tried to drown himself; something preventing his succeeding in the latter mode of death, and Cowper abandoning the attempt, was soon after sent to Doctor Cotton's asylum at St. Albans, where he remained for eighteen months.

Perhaps of all the historical taverns of Fleet-street, the Mitre calls, or did call up, the most interesting associations. It was here that Boswell and Johnson often met. Boswell, then a young fellow about town, just about to start for Utrecht to study law, was introduced to the great despot of literature, on May the 16th, 1763, at the shop of Davies, the bookseller, in Russell-street, Covent Garden. He met him after that three times, and was very graciously received. On Saturday, June 25, Boswell met his hero by accident at an eating-house in Butcher's-row, where he upset the temper of a hot Irishman by dogmatizing on the cause of negroes being black. Boswell followed him as he left, and they arranged to meet in the evening at the Mitre, where Johnson loved to sit up late. Johnson was then living at No. 1, Inner Temple-lane, and there, at nine, the strangely assorted friends met. Boswell says, with solemn awe: "We had a good supper and port wine, of which he then sometimes drank a bottle. The orthodox high-church sound of the Mitre, the figure and manner of the celebrated SAMUEL JOHNSON, the extraordinary powers and precision of his conversation, and the pride arising from finding myself admitted as his companion, produced a variety of sensations, and a pleasing elevation of mind beyond

what I had ever before experienced." That night, over his wine, Johnson justly ridiculed Colley Cibber's birthday odes, and Paul Whitehead's "grand nonsense," and unjustly depreciated a real poet, Gray, who it seems disliked him, and had declined his acquaintance. He praised Doctor Goldsmith as a worthy man and an excellent author, he talked of ghosts (the Cock-lane ghost had been trapped the year before) rather credulously, and promised to draw up for Boswell a plan of study. Boswell gave him in return a brief sketch of his life, and confessed a half-conquered scepticism on religion. The frankness and flattery of the young Scotchman won the doctor, whose rugged heart was thawed by the Mitre port, and he called out to him at last with warmth: "Give me your hand, I have taken a liking to you."

And that social compact held good till Death chilled the hand that then grasped Boswell's. They finished a couple of bottles of port, and sat till between one and two in the morning, no doubt to the extreme disgust of the sleepy waiters. As they parted Johnson said: "Sir, I am glad we have met. I hope we shall pass many evenings, and mornings too, together."

July 1st, Boswell supped again with Johnson at the Mitre, and Goldsmith (already renowned for his poem of the Traveller) was present. Goldsmith was full of respectful attachment to Johnson, and said to Boswell of some unfortunate man: "He is now become miserable, and that insures the protection of Johnson." The doctor talked contemptuously of Churchill, and praised some facetious of Bonnell Thornton, and that is nearly all Boswell remembered of the evening. On July the 6th, Boswell and Johnson supped again at the Mitre, Boswell's landlord in Downing-street having complained of his revels. Goldsmith was present, with also Davies, Mr. Eccles, an Irish gentleman, and the Reverend Mr. Ogilvie, a Scotch poet.

On July the 14th, Boswell and Johnson met again at the Mitre, though Boswell confessed his nerves were much shaken by the quantity of port and the late hours. Johnson laughed at the outcry raised against him, as a Jacobite, for accepting a pension from the House of Hanover. "But, sir," he added, "I think that the pleasure of cursing the House of Hanover and drinking King James's health are amply overbalanced by three hundred pounds a year." He urged Boswell to keep a journal, which Boswell indeed had already

begun. The next meeting at the Mitre, February, 1766, was less sociable, for Johnson had left off wine. Johnson urged Boswell to publish his travels in Corsica, and scolded him for praising Rousseau, whom he had visited when abroad. Another evening Boswell and Goldsmith went arm-in-arm to Bolt-court, to prevail on Johnson to sup with them at the Mitre, but he was indisposed.

"Come then," said good-natured Goldsmith, in his playful way to the little Scotch lion hunter, "we will not go to the Mitre to-night, since we cannot have the big man with us."

On the 30th of September, 1769, Boswell states that Johnson uttered that grand eulogium of the metropolis so grateful to all who love Bow bells.

"Sir," he said, after laughing at Boswell for praising the happiness of a savage life; "sir, the happiness of London is not to be conceived but by those who have been in it. I will venture to say there is more learning and science within the circumference of ten miles from where we now sit than in all the rest of the kingdom."

In other conversations at the Mitre we find Johnson condemning Foote's unfeeling fun, advising Boswell on a law-suit, and praising Boswell as being the least Scotified of Scotchmen. The last interview that Boswell describes at the Mitre was on May the 9th, 1778. The bustling, vain bear leader here mentions one little incident very characteristic of the kind rough giant. Before going to the Mitre, and leaving blind old Mrs. Williams to dine alone, Johnson gave her the choice of a chicken, a sweetbread, or any other little dainty, to be sent her ready-dressed from the tavern opposite. The conversation was grave that day at the Mitre, for the clouds of age were settling on the Doctor. Unfortunately for the young enthusiastic visitor of such localities, the present Mitre is not Doctor Johnson's Mitre, which was pulled down some years ago, and absorbed by the supplementary buildings to Hoare's bank.

The Cheshire Cheese—that old-fashioned tavern of Wine Office-court—is connected by tradition with Goldsmith and Johnson, as the Mitre Tavern is with Johnson and Boswell. In the low ceilinged room, looking into two alleys, with sawdust on the floor, and rude benches of a hundred years ago, they still point out, by tradition, the favourite nooks of the two great

men. Poor, warm-hearted Oliver—poor, blundering, despised, kindly Oliver, who loved his fellow-men though they laughed at his harmless vanity, fine dress, and poverty—must needs have frequented this hidden-away haunt. Doctor Johnson it is certain did. In this court Goldsmith came to lodge at the end of 1760, says Mr. John Forster in his admirable life of the poet. A hard life his had been, for after his tramp through Switzerland and Italy he had returned to England to slave as a journeyman to an apothecary, a proof reader at a printing office, a slavish usher at a Peckham academy, and at last, in 1757, as an author by profession. Then he drudged at the *Monthly Review*, tried to get appointed surgeon at Coromandel, failed, and nearly starved in that miserable Green Arbour-court, Old Bailey, now destroyed. At last came the summer of fame; the weather softened, and one slant thread of sunshine glanced even into Goldsmith's garret. Smollett solicited his help, Johnson claimed his friendship, he wrote the *Citizen of the World*, earned money and leisure to project the *Traveller*, and even boldly gave a supper to Johnson and Percy at his rooms in Wine Office-court.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LXXXII. DOCTOR DAMIAN.

MR. TINTERN had more than was pleasant to think of, as he glided homeward upon the rails. His matrimonial plans for his daughter had found in that young lady a very stubborn resistance. He could divine no reason for it; and he took to sulking and bullying by turns. It was very desirable to establish his daughter just now, and to secure the particular son-in-law who sought the young lady's hand, because he was very wealthy, and, owing to peculiar circumstances, in a position to make certain difficulties of a very pressing nature easy to Mr. Tintern. He had "gone into a mine," which was insolvent; and he had made the directors an offer, by way of compromise, which would save him; and his intended son-in-law was one of these directors. There was another trouble, a foolish bank speculation, in which the same gentleman had also a potent influence, and might modify the urgency and rapidity of coming calls, of which Mr. Tintern, as well he might, stood much in fear. Mr. Tintern, therefore, in his homeward drive,

had ample matter for reflection. On his arrival at the Grange, he asked for Miss Ethel. There was an inexplicable cloud over the household. The servants were solemn and laconic. No one knew distinctly where she was; and all were agreed in referring him to Mrs. Tintern, who was not very well, and in her room.

Up the stairs, with very uncomfortable qualms and vague misgivings, he ran; and, in the darkened room of his wife, learned that Ethel had eloped!

All was mystery. Mrs. Tintern had not a great deal of energy or judgment in an emergency. She had sent a carriage express to the town of Roydon to bring the Reverend Mr. Foljambe, the vicar, and Mr. Puntles, the antiquary, to advise her in her perplexity. The assistance of these admirably selected counsellors did not result in very much; except, indeed, that the occurrence became speedily well known throughout the whole town of Roydon.

A sage servant, on a steady horse, was sent off, at a jog-trot, to the nearest railway station to make inquiry, and returned some hours later a little tipsy, and in other respects as wise as he set out.

The only clue to the mysterious disappearance of the young lady was that a carriage had been seen for some time on the narrow road in the rear of the Grange, where the wooded ground affords the closest cover for an unobserved approach. The same carriage, or one very like it, had been seen in the village of Crowpton, near which five roads meet; and here, in bewilderment, the pursuit was, after a time, abandoned.

When Mr. Tintern arrived, nearly five hours had passed since Miss Tintern's flight. That did not deter him, however; he started without delay, and did not return until late next day, to find that Mrs. Tintern had received a short and rather distracted letter from her daughter, who was, in fact, married to Captain Vivian. For many hours after his arrival, under this great blow to all his plans, Mr. Tintern quite forgot Roydon Hall and its concerns.

Lady Vernon was, however, far too important an influence in the general scheme of his speculations, to be long out of his thoughts. Lady Vernon, therefore, had a note from him, a part of which she did not very well understand, not at all in Mr. Tintern's usual neat style.

It said that not knowing whether Lady Vernon was well enough to see him, he had been compelled, without even taking off

his hat at the Grange, to run on upon business of the very most momentous kind. He had been in attendance at Glarewoods, and he and Antomarchi were both of opinion that the commissioner took precisely the same view of the case in which so many concur, who are profoundly and painfully interested in the case of Miss Vernon. "Captain Vivian, whom, owing to special circumstances with which I shall acquaint you, I cannot, for a moment, dismiss from my thoughts, has behaved like a villain. It pains me to apply that term to any person who was ever honoured by your notice or consideration."

At that moment, not a living creature, except Mr. and Mrs. Tintern, and the absconding lover, was aware that Captain Vivian had any but the slightest acquaintance with Miss Ethel Tintern, or dreamed of connecting her disappearance with him.

Lady Vernon, who was always perfectly up in the Roydon news, without making the least apparent effort to learn it, had heard of Ethel's flight, without knowing whether quite to believe it or not, or, in any case, caring about it. Mr. Tintern's words respecting Captain Vivian—Elwyn, as she called him—she, with a morbid terror, referred to the suspicion that was nearest her own heart. Fate seemed driving her into a corner. Must she avow the grand folly and humiliation of her life? Must that proud, conspicuous woman stand in the gaze of the world in abject penance?

In the mean time Mr. Marston, furnished with a report of what had taken place before the commissioner, noted down from the careful narrative of Mr. Dawe, ran up to London that night to talk the matter over with an able Chancery Q.C., who always lingered late in town, and who was leader in all the Warhampton business. This gentleman knew Mr. Steele officially, and could estimate the view he was likely to take.

"Damian's establishment, and Damian's opinion, stand very high in our court," he said. "Antomarchi has only appeared once or twice, second fiddle, you know; Damian's thinking the depositions sufficient, will go a great way; and the evidence is so strong and clear——"

"So plausible and audacious," said Marston.

"That I am quite satisfied," continued the barrister, "there is not a chance of getting the court to order the young lady's discharge. I don't think by habeas corpus, at

common law, with such evidence, you would have the smallest chance, either. You must lie by for a time, and if it be as her friends think, the medical people there will find it out, and all ultimately be as you would wish. But I should not advise public proceedings. They would fail; and the young lady occupying so conspicuous a position, the affair would become the talk of all England. It is better to wait."

A gloomy and distracted letter Marston wrote to Maximilla Medwyn; and one as gloomy, but more reserved, to Mr. Dawe.

What was he now to do? Inaction in such a state of things was intolerable! A few hours later saw him at Brighton, on the door-steps of the house in which Mr. Damian for the time resided; it was night, and the moon shining, and a thin chill mist made sea, and shipping, and houses vague.

"Can I see Doctor Damian?" he asked of the servant who opened the door.

"If you please to wait a moment, sir, I'll inquire; who shall I say?"

"He does not know me, and my name will hardly help him; give him this card, however, and say that I call upon urgent business connected with Glarewoods. I'll wait here till you come down."

He stood on the steps, looking toward the sea, wondering whether Mr. Damian would see him, and without any distinct plan as to how to order and arrange what he had to say.

The servant returned; Doctor Damian would see him.

He followed to the drawing-room, in which were an unusual number of candles burning, and for the first time he saw Doctor Damian, of whom he had heard a great deal in the course of his life.

He saw, standing at some distance, a tall, lean man, broad-shouldered, erect, with hair white as snow, a broad square forehead, and a resolute face.

He had heard that this man was benevolent and pious. He saw nothing in his face but cold command and sternness.

He placed a chair for Mr. Marston, with a slight bow, and asked him, by name, to sit down.

"You are a son of Lord Warhampton, I conjecture, from the address upon your card?" said the old man, in a voice still clear, and, like his aspect, somewhat stern.

Mr. Marston assented, and the doctor, taking a chair, asked him to state the object of his visit.

Doctor Damian listened to the young

man's fluent and sometimes vehement address with a countenance unmoved and impenetrable.

"We have never had at Glarewoods a single case of fraudulently imputed insanity," he said with cold decision. "The statement on which Miss Vernon was admitted, and furnished in the form of attested copies of affidavits, was conclusive upon that point; I assume them to be true; you mention the inquiry just held at Glarewoods, on the motion of friends and relations, into this case. I have heard from Automarchi on the subject. Have you about you the report you said you had of what occurred there, and if so can you permit me to read it?"

Mr. Marston placed the paper in his hands. He glanced through it. Mr. Marston could not help admiring the large, cold, grey eyes with which the old man read it. To judge by his countenance, it had not made the slightest impression upon him.

"When shall we know the nature of the commissioner's report?" he asked.

"In a day or two, I believe," Marston said.

"And what particular request, Mr. Marston, do you urge upon me?" he inquired.

"I want you, with the immense powers you possess in this matter, to recognise the awful obligation so obviously imposed on your conscience, and to take this inquiry actively into your own hands."

The old man smiled coldly.

"You are frank, Mr. Marston. You may fail to persuade, but you don't mince the matter."

"I hope, Doctor Damian, I have not spoken too strongly: I would not offend you for any consideration."

"I am never offended, sir, by bluntness. Will you take some tea, sir, or a glass of sherry; or will you allow me to order some supper: it is later than I thought."

All these hospitable offers were declined with thanks.

"I don't say I am not obliged to you, Mr. Marston, for this call; but you must remember that I speak with a knowledge of Doctor Automarchi's great ability, and of the statement on which the patient was received at Glarewoods. I quite accept the responsibility that rests upon me; but, from a rather long experience, I can assure you that relations are often very much at issue upon the question of a patient's insanity, when a medical man can entertain no doubt either of its existence or of its very advanced development. I will bear

your request in mind. That is the utmost I can say. But I counsel you not to be sanguine. I don't share your hopes."

"But, Mr. Damian, you will not let the matter rest?"

"I shall make the inquiries necessary to satisfy the friends and relations whom you represent, sir; I can say no more on the subject."

There was something harsh in the tones in which this was spoken that warned Charles Marston that he might possibly do wisely to forbear any further pressure. The old gentleman was accustomed to command, and his air and looks were peremptory.

"Not much sympathy there," thought Charles Marston, as, with a heavy heart, he descended the steps, and walked back toward the London railway.

CHAPTER LXXXIII. THREE DOCTORS.

A LETTER reached Mr. Dawe two days later, from his solicitor, stating that the commissioner had reported strongly against removing Miss Vernon from the restraints of her present position; and that the court would not intervene.

This letter made its dismal tour of the three principal promoters of the inquiry; from Mr. Dawe to Miss Medwyn it flew, and from Miss Medwyn to Mr. Marston.

Mr. Marston, on receipt of it, took wing instantly for the Hermitage, in the vague pursuit of sympathy, and longing for some one to talk to.

There are situations and states of mind in which it is quite impossible to remain stationary; a universal irritation of the nervous system, which can only be subdued by overpowering bodily fatigue, and in which nature instinctively impels to change and exertion.

Things were looking very black. He was not aware, until the adverse result was actually made known, how much hope he had secretly cherished.

Whirling up the embowered avenue of the quiet Hermitage, with four reeking horses, at a canter—he would have had six if they would have brought him there five minutes sooner—Charles Marston reached the steps of the old-fashioned house, and running up them he rang at the hall-door as impetuously as if his best-beloved lay within, in the agonies of death, and he had arrived with a specific in his hand.

On learning that Miss Medwyn was in the drawing-room, without waiting to be announced, he hurried to the room, and

found her with Mr. Dawe, who had arrived only ten minutes before.

Mr. Dawe had other things beside this to trouble him. A letter had reached him from Captain Vivian, in whom, by a kind of adoption, he took a very near interest, relating what had occurred. Mr. Dawe was angry. He had been tricked in return for years of kindness.

Why should he be surprised or angry? If it were not that every child of earth must learn wisdom for himself, in the school of pain and labour, and if experience were orally communicable, as old people are prone to fancy it is, and if youth were less conceited and selfish, comparatively few foolish things would be done, and this life would lose, in a large measure, its efficacy as a place of discipline.

Mr. Dawe is going on with this particular news to Lady Vernon. She may or may not see him, as she thinks fit; but she ought to hear it as soon as he; and he is not deterred by the language she held to him a few weeks ago.

"I must see Lady Vernon first, upon quite another matter," said Mr. Dawe, therefore, mysteriously. "But I will meet you, Mr. Marston, in town, at my attorney's, this day week. I have put my hand to the plough, and will not look back."

"Could you not name an earlier day?" urged Mr. Marston.

"This day week, if you please," said Mr. Dawe.

"And where will a letter find you in the mean time?" asked active Miss Medwyn, who rather liked writing notes.

"I shall sleep, to-morrow night, at the Vernon Arms; and I shall not leave Roydon till evening. I have business in the neighbourhood."

And so Mr. Dawe took his leave.

A week's delay, to a man upon the rack, is a good deal. It was quite impossible that Charles Marston should be quiet all that time.

Maximilla liked his impatience, and sympathised with all his unreasonableness.

"Quite accidentally," she said, "I heard such a character of Doctor Antomarchi, from our rector, here; he had a cousin who was confined at Glarewoods, and discharged about a year ago; and he says that Doctor Antomarchi is quite a charming person, and the kindest man you can imagine; and he thought Mr. Damian, on the contrary, a severe man, with hardly a human sympathy, although his establishment is conducted on very genial and in-

dulgent principles. His view of Mr. Damian corresponds very much with your impression, on seeing him at Brighton. He thought him conscientious, but cold and stern. Now I have taken a whim into my head; I don't know why, but I do fancy if we went to Glarewoods and saw Doctor Antomarchi, to-day, some good would come of it. I think he would allow me to see Maud, and I have been two or three times on the point of ordering the carriage and setting out for the railway."

Full of this whimsical presentiment, I shall leave her, still in conference with Charles Marston, who is only too well pleased to find the active old lady almost as restless as himself.

Night descends on Glarewoods, and all the country round. Moonlight falls on lofty trees and dark yew hedges, on high, carved chimneys, steep roofs, and black oak cage-work with white plaster between. From long rows of windows overlooking the croquet-ground peeps the peculiar soft light, emitted through the dull globes fixed in the ceilings of the patients' rooms. This is not one of the festive nights at Glarewoods, and neither ball nor concert stirs the strange gaiety of the colony that dwells there.

The great house, with its sylvan surroundings, looks all serenity and happiness; more like fair Belmont, as Lorenzo and Jessica beheld it, in the moonlight, than a madhouse.

A visitor is closeted with Antomarchi. It is Doctor Malkin, who has come from Roydon, to talk and hear, on Lady Vernon's behalf, all that it may at this moment concern her to learn.

They have had their conference, and have dined together. They are sitting now at an open window, looking out on the moonlit croquet-ground. A small round table, with decanters and glasses on it, stands close by; they are sipping their claret, with their eyes turned toward the drooping flowers and dewy foliage, while they talk for a minute longer about Miss Vernon.

Candles are burning at the further end of the room. They prefer the open window and the moon.

"You and Miss Medwyn are at issue respecting the young lady's state of mind," said Antomarchi.

"I am a very secondary opinion on the question," answered Malkin, peering into the claret in his glass; "you may observe that I contribute, myself, next to nothing to the proof, and rest my opinion entirely

upon the assumption that the evidence on which I found it is strictly true; and I have been looking the subject up, and I'm not afraid to maintain that opinion anywhere."

"Nor am I; nor is Damian," said Automarchi. "She is violent; she was troublesome this morning. To-morrow, at twelve, I have arranged to give that young lady a fright that will a good deal tame her."

"It is very sad it should be so," murmured Doctor Malkin, still looking down with a gloomy shake of his head.

"It is very sad," echoed Automarchi, abstractedly.

And there followed a silence, during which Darkdale entered the room.

"Miss Medwyn, the old lady who was here before the commissioner," Mr. Darkdale said softly, leaning over his shoulder, "is in the waiting-room, with a friend, and hopes that you will see her, and desires me to say, that she is most anxious to visit Miss Vernon, for ever so short a time, in her room."

"Tell her I regret I can't possibly permit an interview with Miss Vernon; but that I shall be very happy, in a few minutes, to see Miss Medwyn in the waiting-room."

"I remember you, Automarchi, in Paris," said Doctor Malkin, as soon as Darkdale was gone. "You and I have played billiards there, and could hardly afford our demitasse of coffee after. I little fancied I should see you what you are. If I had your cards to play, I should die a baronet with ten thousand a year, and you can play them better than I. I wish you'd tell me your secret; what god do you worship? Æsculapius, Fortune, Satan? Do give a poor devil a wrinkle."

"Fill your glass; take comfort; I'm not quite so prosperous as you fancy. I have burnt my fingers a little in that cursed thing that old Tintern went into; but, as you say, I am making way, notwithstanding."

"Making way? Why, my dear fellow, you know all this must belong to you, it *must*, and managed as you would manage it, it is the revenue of a principality. When does old Damian return?"

"In a month, perhaps; perhaps in six; perhaps *never*," says Automarchi, who was in a state of luxurious good-humour. "It is high time he should take a little rest; it is

only fair. He can't be many months on this side of seventy, and he may sing *Nun sum qualis eram*."

"I am not what I used to *was*," translated Doctor Malkin, facetiously.

"He does not like work as he used," continued Automarchi, "and he has confidence in me; and he feels he need not fatigue himself as he used; he may take his ease, and yet all go well."

"All go better," said Malkin.

"I did not say that; but it is not a great way from the truth. He is sometimes a little bit in one's way; but his name in the concern is valuable, and he is a good man, and always, at least, means well."

"He'll make over the whole concern to you before a year, on an annuity, and he won't live three years after; and then you are monarch of all you survey! You'll be wanting a sharp fellow to play second fiddle, eh? And if you think I would answer, it is the kind of thing I should like."

"First make me monarch of all I survey. It would be idle choosing my man Friday till I step into my island."

A slight noise at the other end of the room attracted the eyes of both. They saw a tall man with a resolute face, and hair white as snow, standing near the door, hat in hand, as if off a journey.

With an odd sensation, for he did not know at what moment he had entered, Doctor Malkin, sitting in the moonlight, with his charet glass in his fingers, recognised Mr. Damian, exhibited, like a figure of Schalkin's, in the oblique candle-light.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

CHAPTER X. DESPAIR.

THE silence which fell upon the company at Gerald Hardinge's unexpected announcement was broken by Mr. Dunsany, who called out in his most melodious tones:

"My dear Gerald, I am delighted that you have thought the time has arrived when it is expedient to make this announcement, to the public as it were. When, weeks ago, you first mentioned to me, as your intimate friend, the fact of your engagement with Miss Pierrepont, I told you, if you recollect, that it would be advisable to make your friends acquainted, as speedily as possible, with the exact position of affairs, in order that there might be no possible misunderstanding. And you will acknowledge I was right, for I am sure if our friend Hayward had known how matters had stood he would not have hinted a doubt as to Miss Pierrepont's ability; while as to Snick——"

"I beg your pardon, Dunsany," said Mr. Hayward, "I said nothing about Miss Pierrepont's appearance or conduct, of both of which I have the highest admiration; but I cannot allow that even the great fact of her marrying the count here is likely to endow her with ability, or to render her a modern Mrs. Siddons."

"Perhaps it will be advisable to change the subject," said Gerald Hardinge, haughtily. "After the announcement that I have made, it is perhaps scarcely in good taste to discuss Miss Pierrepont's qualities or qualifications in my presence. The restriction, however, need be but very temporary, as I am about to take my departure;

the season is broken up," continued he, rising from his chair, "and this will be the last time of our meeting; but I hope at some future period, gentlemen, to renew the pleasant impressions which I have had during my companionship with you, and to come amongst you once again."

"And bring your wife," suggested Mr. Snick, who, since the conclusion of his story, had remained perfectly quiet, sucking away at his pipe with great enjoyment.

"And bring my wife, sir!" echoed Gerald, angrily. He would have said more, but for the warning pressure of Dunsany's foot. As it was, he merely bowed and left the room, amidst general cheering and expressions of good wishes.

When Gerald Hardinge left the tavern, with his brain on fire and his heart aching within him, he felt the necessity for solitude and self-examination; and accordingly skirting the wharves on the edge of the Wexe, and crossing by the lower railway station, made the best of his way to the gardens of North-Hedge. These gardens, given up during the day to nursemaids and their charges, and to feeble valetudinarians of both sexes, who, screened by large banks of greenery from the cutting winds, sit idly watching the railway traffic beneath them, are closed at sundown, and supposed to be deserted during the night. In the earlier days, however, of his sojourn at Wexeter, Gerald had often used them as a short cut from one part of the town to the other; and recollecting a gate which could be scaled with tolerable ease, he proceeded to climb it, and speedily flung himself down on one of the benches which nestle under the avenue of broad elms intersecting the garden. The business carried on at the railway station at Wexeter has apparently

been affected by the general quietude of the place; there are but two passenger trains during the night, and the goods traffic is very limited, so that the station upon which Gerald Hardinge was looking down lay hushed in repose, and, save by the sighing of the night winds through the trees, the silence around him was unbroken.

This was as he wished it. The thoughts which racked him might be too deep for concealment, and he would have had no human eye to play the spy upon such consequences as would result from his contemplated analysis of his own feelings, and the determination which he would then arrive at. To stop a ribald laugh, to controvert the effect of a sneer upon a woman whom he had loved, he had in the heat of the moment publicly assumed a position, the retention or resignation of which, fraught with the deepest interest as it would be on his future life, must be determined upon at once.

A woman whom he had loved! Was he, then, to think of as past and bygone that passion which thrilled his soul and tingled in his veins, when he held Madge in his arms but a few short hours previously; as faded and vanished that love-lit light which had cast its glamour over the ordinary occurrences of every-day life, and steeped them all in roseate hues? Was the temple of his love so fairy a fabric that at an idle or a lying word uttered by a gossip it should suddenly collapse, burying in its ruins the idol which he had set up therein and worshipped so tenderly? An idle or lying word? No, to the tale told by that wretched old man neither of these terms could be applied.

Alas! what Gerald did know tallied completely with what Mr. Snick had said. It was on the night of the thunder-storm that he had called at Madge Pierrepont's lodging, and found her absent, attending, as her sister Rose had told him, to a business engagement. He recollected how he had waited for her, patiently walking up and down the street, heedless of the raging elements, and how he had seen her return at a late hour. He recollected how he had accused her the next day of having been to meet some man, and how, without positively denying it, she had put aside the question in her soothing way. And all that time, while he was waiting for her in the storm, not even with a hope of speaking to her, and going away as it might be almost contented when he had seen her safely shut

within her own door, she had been to meet another man, who "stooped and put his arms round her and kissed her!" Gerald remembered the exact words which Mr. Snick had used, and cursed him aloud for using them.

And yet, in the full knowledge of her treachery and deceit, he had acknowledged her before them as his affianced wife! His affianced wife! That was the position that he had publicly declared her to hold; that was the position that she actually held; for from her manner that evening, her last words, her parting touch, Gerald had but little doubt as to Madge's answer to his appeal. His affianced wife! who went to meet another man in secret, and refused to give him, who would have died for her, any account of her proceedings on that eventful evening.

Now what was he to do? The idea of withdrawing the proposal which he had made, of breaking away from the compact which, as he imagined, was virtually agreed upon between them, never entered into Gerald's mind. What he had said to Madge Pierrepont was, according to his view, quite sufficient in itself to bind him, without taking into consideration the quasi-public announcement which he had made. And this act of hers—the meeting with this unknown man—took place before he had actually proposed to her, and while she was yet a free agent. What was he to do? He must go through with it, carrying the burden which he had laid upon his own shoulders as best he might. He would see Madge the first thing in the morning, tell her exactly what had occurred, repeat the story as it had been told to him, and ask her what she had to say in her defence. She would be truthful in her reply, he had an innate conviction of that, and then he should know what to decide. If she acknowledged that there was a foundation for Mr. Snick's story—and it seemed impossible to think that anything so circumstantial could be the work of mere invention—where would be that happiness in the future which he had so joyfully pictured to himself?

He would keep his word; she should have nothing to complain of on that score: he would marry her, and take her away with him to London; but as to living with her, that could never be. If she had deceived him then, with what confidence could he trust his honour to her keeping when surrounded by flatterers and tried by temptation! No! that is the only course

open to him, and the one that he must follow, provided always that their manner of living can be kept a secret from the world. If the secret of his betrayed trust, of his blighted life, were once known, Gerald felt that the exposure would kill him. Those were the only terms he would exact from Madge: that it should be a life-long secret between them, and so long as she kept to them, she should share his income, and be left to do as she pleased. And having settled this in his own mind, Gerald rose from his seat, and made the best of his way home.

When he arrived at his lodging, he let himself in with his key, and was proceeding straight to bed, when, thinking he saw a light in the sitting-room occupied conjointly by himself and Mr. Dunsany, he opened the door, and discovered that worthy stretched at full length on the sofa, and snoring in a remarkably resonant manner. Gerald was about to retire quietly, when a snore of extra power awoke the sleeper, and Mr. Dunsany, rubbing his eyes, sat upright, apparently considerably refreshed by his slumber.

"Come in, Gerald," he cried, "and don't be after scuttling off to bed like that, when I have been sitting up here broad awake, and denying myself natural sleep, for the chance of a talk to you. I went straight to your room directly I got back, and finding you were not there, I determined to sit up on the chance of catching you before you turned in, as I have something very important to say to you."

"Say away, then," said Gerald, throwing himself listlessly into a chair, and plunging his hands into his pockets; "say away, I'm listening."

"Listening!" echoed Mr. Dunsany, who had gone to a little sideboard, and placed some bottles and glasses on the table. "But I want you to talk as well, and with a view to that, hadn't you better put a pipe in your mouth? I have no hopes of improving your accent, which is essentially English, and bad, but tobacco is a great tranquilliser, and brings out the philosophy in a man's nature, and that is a quality of which you have decidedly no superfluity."

"It is a quality which all of us require more or less," said Gerald, "and most of us more."

"Don't be sneering, and going in for the Diogenes business, my dear Gerald," said Mr. Dunsany, who, meanwhile, had mixed himself a tumbler of grog, and lighted a large pipe; "it's not natural to you, I

know; but you are upset and worried just now."

"I am utterly miserable, Dunsany," said Gerald, with a groan.

"Don't say that, my dear lad, for Heaven's sake," cried his friend. "I've made a good many blunders in my time, but I never made a greater than when I persuaded you to come to that confounded supper to-night, or when I permitted that preposterous old idiot Snick to tell that cock-and-bull story."

Gerald raised his head, and looked up earnestly:

"You don't believe that story?" he asked.

"Which part of it?" asked Mr. Dunsany.

"Any part," said Gerald.

"Which part would you wish me to believe?" asked Mr. Dunsany. "I am open to conviction, my dear lad, and I will oblige you to the best of my ability."

"Don't be fooling, Dunsany! It is scarcely a subject for jest. Give me a plain answer if you can."

"My dear Gerald, the question is rather a complicated and a delicate one, and I wanted to deal with it as delicately as I could. It resolves itself into this: do I believe that a certain lady, a common acquaintance of ours, went on a certain evening, memorable as the occasion of the thunder-storm, up the Dumpington-road, and, in a lane near the turnpike, was met and embraced by a gentleman? Is that the question, or rather one of the questions?"

"It is."

"Well, then, upon my honour, I do believe it! In the first place, I do not think that old Snick has the power of inventing anything at all, much less anything so circumstantial as that story was in its details of ginger-beer, turnpike, tollman, and all the rest of it; and, in the next place, I have noticed, for the last few days, a certain absence of mind and preoccupation of manner in the lady in question. Now, as to the other part of it; do I believe that one Gerald Hardinge was the gentleman who met the lady in the lane near the Dumpington turnpike? Upon my conscience I do not. Now, am I right?"

"So far as I am concerned you are quite right," said Gerald, with a heavy sigh.

"Exactly," cried Mr. Dunsany; "and it was a fine manly thing of you to dash in as you did, my dear lad, and endeavour to save a lady's character, which was being roughly handled. Only, like most other

spirited and inexperienced persons, you went too far, and you proved too much. Why the deuce couldn't you content yourself with vindicating Miss Pierrepont's character, without asserting that she is your affianced wife?"

"I said so because it is the fact," said Gerald, quietly.

"The devil it is!" cried Mr. Dunsany, with a long whistle; adding, after a little pause, "that quite alters the case. You should have told me that before you asked me my opinion."

"It was scarcely a subject you would have expected me to joke upon," said Gerald.

"No," said Dunsany, "not to joke; but when a point is stretched here it may easily be stretched there. However, it's no use for us to be beating about the bush in this way. You say you are utterly miserable. I have been your chum as yet, and, as a man who is older than you, and has had much more experience of the world, I want to see what can be done to help you."

"Nothing can be done," said Gerald, moodily; "nothing."

"Bah, nothing!" said Mr. Dunsany. "Now let us see how the land lies. You say you are engaged to Miss Pierrepont?"

"Well, not exactly engaged. I have asked her to become my wife."

"And she has not replied?"

"Not exactly."

"Faith, that's a fine sort of engagement," said Mr. Dunsany; "like my countrymen's reciprocity, all on one side."

"What I mean is, she has not replied in so many words," said Gerald; "but there is no doubt of her understanding the offer I made her, and of her accepting it—unfortunately."

"And why unfortunately?"

"Do you ask me that after having heard Mr. Snick's story?"

"To the devil with Mr. Snick and his story," said Mr. Dunsany. "When did you lay your title and lands at Miss Pierrepont's feet?"

"I asked her to become my wife to-night, not half an hour before I met you."

"To-night!" echoed Mr. Dunsany. "And you are grissing your head off because she chose to meet somebody two or three weeks ago."

"But she knew that I was fond of her then," pleaded Gerald.

"Knew that you were fond of her! A young lady of her beauty and powers of

fascination must know that there are hundreds of men who are fond of her, but she cannot be expected to reserve her hand for any one in particular, unless he asks for it."

"No, certainly, but——"

"But me no buts, as I have no doubt Hayward says in his five-act tragedy, which Miss Pierrepont would not play. Seriously, Gerald, you are making a donkey of yourself. Instead of being ready to jump out of your skin with delight at the fact of being about to be married to one of the prettiest and cleverest young women possibly to be met with, you are crooning over a cock-and-bull story of her having met some one else some time before you did her the honour to propose to her."

"There is something in what you say," said Gerald, brightening a little.

"Something! There is more than you will ever be able to compass, unless your mind expands a great deal, and that's not likely now that you are going away from us, and you will lose the chance of my tuition. Besides, take my word for it, that meeting was not exactly as it was represented by that old Snick, who is a malevolent little wretch, and would put the worst construction on anything. Even you must have sense enough to see that Miss Pierrepont is not the sort of woman likely to allow herself to be mixed up in any compromising affair."

"I am afraid there is no question about the meeting," said Gerald, doubtfully.

"No," said Dunsany; "but granted that a meeting took place, the whole force of it, for good or for evil, depends upon the person whom she met."

"It was a man," said Gerald.

"No doubt," said Dunsany; "even Snick is not idiot enough to make a mistake in that. But, as I said before, Miss Pierrepont is not the sort of person to make promiscuous assignations, and you may take your oath that this man was her father, her brother, or something of that kind."

"She never spoke to me of any of her relations, except the sister who lives with her," said Gerald.

"The very reason why she would be more likely to meet them in secret," said Dunsany. "When you have known a little more of the profession, my dear Gerald, you will find there are numbers of persons in it, especially the female members, who have relations whom they are very shy of noticing in public. Thus, for instance, Miss Montmorency has picked up a bit of

education here and there, has a fine figure and a good voice, and is leading lady on the Worcester circuit; while her papa, who is not called Montmorency at all, but Glubb, keeps a small shop or shed in the New Cut. Her line is light comedy, his is coal and potato. Depend upon it, something of that sort is the case in this instance, and you will be very good friends with the old gentleman some day and let him supply the Wallsends when you settle in town."

"Snick said it was a tall man," said Gerald.

"There is no particular reason that I know of why a father should not be tall," said Dunsany, "though most of them do run short and broad. However, this might be the brother, the Wife's Secret business. You recollect the play? A brother who has come to griet, and is in hiding, and comes to visit his sister secretly, and is suspected by the husband to be her lover. Just our story, by George! Perhaps Miss Pierrepont's brother has come to grief, frisked the till, or climbed up behind somebody's back on a bill-stamp, or some ingenious little proceeding of that nature, and is keeping out of the way. Depend upon it, it is something of that kind. Now finish your grog, and get off to bed easy in your mind; you are sure to find it all right in the morning."

"I shall go round and call upon her the first thing," said Gerald.

"Do," said Mr. Dunsany. "So long as you have a good sleep to-night you may do what you please to-morrow. Well," he muttered to himself, looking after the young man's departing figure, "I hope I'm right: I do not think the girl is the sort to play double, particularly with such a frank, honest nature as his. But, even if it comes to the worst, I have postponed his misery twelve hours, and it was worth while sitting up a little later and drinking an extra glass of grog to do that."

"And what is the matter with my Susan?" said Mr. Dunsany, coming down to breakfast the next morning and meeting Miss Cave on the staircase. "Has she come to say that she can conceal her passion for her Mike no longer? And has she a carriage and four outside waiting to convey him to the village church?"

"Get along with you, do, Dunsany," said Miss Cave, grinning. "I was not looking for you, but for Mr. Hardinge."

"As I tapped at Mr. Hardinge's door just now he roared out that he was in his

bath," said Dunsany; "consequently he is not in a position to meet my Susan's gaze."

"Well then I will give this letter to you to take to him. It's from Miss Pierrepont, and important I am sure, because she begged me to bring it to him myself."

"Right your are," said Dunsany. And he took the letter to Gerald, whom he found in his dressing-gown. Gerald turned very pale when he saw the writing.

"It's from Madge," he said.

"I know it," said Dunsany. "Miss Cave told me; open it now. It's all right, depend upon it."

Gerald opened the letter and read it through. Then tossing it to his friend, he fell back in his chair, and buried his face in his hands.

"My poor dear fellow, what can be the matter?" said Dunsany. Then casting his eye over the letter, added, "By George! old Snick was right after all."

END OF BOOK THE FIRST.

MEMORY AND ABSENCE OF MIND.

MEMORY is nearly as much a puzzle as ever. Why in some men memory should be strong and in others weak; why the memory should be stronger at one time than another; why the same man should have a strong memory for some subjects, and a weak one for others; why illness should obliterate some subjects completely from the mind—are problems still undergoing patient and attentive scrutiny.

The memory for figures, or power of mental calculation, is well known to all of us, either by its presence or its absence. Jedediah Buxton, George Parker Bidder, and Zerah Colburn, are instances too familiarly known to need detail here. George Watson, the Sussex calculator, could tell the dates of every day since he was a child, and what he was doing on that day; he could show many other strange freaks of memory, but was a heavy, ignorant fellow generally, very vain of his one acquirement.

The memory of languages is quite a distinct faculty, so far as can be judged from recorded instances. Mithridates, we are told, could converse, in their own languages, to the natives of twenty-three countries which were under his sway. Cardinal Mezzofanti appears to have had this faculty in a stronger degree than any other person that ever lived. While educating for the priesthood, he learned Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Spanish, French,

German, and Swedish. As a professor at some of the Italian universities, he constantly added to his store; until at the age of forty-three he could read in twenty languages, and converse in eighteen. In 1841, when he was sixty-seven years old, he was as well acquainted with Portuguese, English, Dutch, Danish, Russian, Polish, Bohemian, Servian, Magyar, Turkish, Irish, Welsh, Wallachian, Albanian, Bulgarian, Illyrian, Lettish, Lappish, as with the languages which he had first learned; while to Arabic he added Persian, Sanscrit, Koordish, Georgian, Syriac, Chaldee, Samaritan, Chinese, Coptic, Ethiopic, Abyssinian, and other Asiatic and African tongues. At the time of his death, in 1849, Mezzofanti could write eloquently, and converse fluently, in more than seventy languages.

All the other accounts of memory for words are poor compared with this; nevertheless, many of them are sufficiently remarkable. John Kemble used to say that he could learn a whole number of the *Morning Post* in four days; and General Christie made a similar assertion; but it is not known how far either of them verified this statement. Robert Dillon could repeat in the morning six columns of a newspaper which he had read overnight. During the Repeal debates in the House of Commons, thirty-seven years ago, one of the members wrote out his speech, sent it to the newspapers, and repeated it to the House in the evening; it was found to be the same verbatim as that which he had written out. John Fuller, a land agent in Norfolk, could remember every word of a sermon, and write it out correctly after going home; this was tested by comparing his written account with the clergyman's manuscript. Scaliger could repeat a hundred verses or more after having read them a single time. Seneca could repeat two thousand words on hearing them once. Magliabechi, who had a prodigious memory, was once put to a severe test. A gentleman lent him a manuscript, which was read and returned; the owner some time afterwards, pretending he had lost it, begged Magliabechi to write out as much as he could remember; whereupon the latter, appealing to his memory, wrote out the whole essay. Cyrus, if some of the old historians are to be credited, could remember the name of every soldier in his immense army. There was a Corsican boy who could rehearse forty thousand words, whether sense or nonsense, as they were dictated, and then

repeat them in the reversed order without making a single mistake. A physician of Massachusetts, about half a century ago, could repeat the whole of *Paradise Lost* without mistake, although he had not read it for twenty years. Euler, the great mathematician, when he became blind, could repeat the whole of Virgil's *Æneid*, and could remember the first line and the last line in every page of the particular edition which he had been accustomed to read before he became blind.

One kind of retentive memory may be considered as the result of sheer hard work, a determination towards one particular achievement, without reference either to cultivation or to memory on other subjects. This is frequently shown by persons in humble life in regard to the Bible. An old beggar-man at Stirling, known some forty years ago as Blind Alick, afforded an instance of this. He knew the whole of the Bible by heart; inasmuch that, if a sentence were read to him, he could name book, chapter and verse; or, if the book, chapter, and verse were named, he could give the exact words. A gentleman, to test him, repeated a verse, purposely making one verbal inaccuracy; Alick hesitated, named the place where the passage is to be found, but at the same time pointed out the verbal error. The same gentleman asked him to repeat the ninetieth verse of the seventh chapter of the book of Numbers. Alick almost instantly replied, "There is no such verse; that chapter has only eighty-nine verses."

There are no phenomena of memory more strange than those in which—usually through some illness, or some accidental injury to the brain—some particular facts or classes of facts baffle the recollection altogether. The instances recorded by Abercrombie, Winslow, Wigan, Carpenter, Holland, and other physicians, are too well founded to admit of any doubt. There was a gentleman who, when in disturbed health, uniformly called coals, paper, and paper, coals, quite unconscious of any anomaly in the matter. Another called his snuff-box a hogshend; and it was remarked that, in earlier life, he had been connected with the tobacco trade in the West Indies. Doctor Scandella, an Italian physician resident at New York, was attacked with yellow fever at New York; he spoke only English when first attacked, only French in the height of the fever, and remembered only his own original Italian just before his death. A Frenchman, at the age of twenty-seven,

spoke English well; he received an injury in the head, and could then for some time only remember French, believing and asserting himself to be but sixteen years old. At St. Thomas's Hospital an invalid suddenly began to talk in Welsh, a language which he had entirely neglected for thirty years. One lady lost the memory of exactly four years, well remembering events before and after that period; and in another instance the lost years amounted to eight or ten. A gentleman forgot the names of his friends, but remembered their ages, and adopted that as the most convenient mode of referring to them. Another lost so completely the meaning of nouns-substantive, that he unconsciously gave the names of places to things, persons to events, and so on, rendering his talk unintelligible. A lady, similarly under temporary ailment, could not remember the names of any of the ordinary things in her household; she was forced to go from room to room, and point to the articles concerning which she had any orders to give, or any observations to make. A military officer, mentioned by Doctor Winslow, sometimes remembered his own name, but not his address; at other times remembered his address, but not his name. He would occasionally, with a perplexed expression of countenance, accost a stranger, "I am Major —, can you tell me where I live?" Under his other frame of mind, "I live at —, can you tell me my name?"

Corroborative instances of a kind more or less analogous are so numerous, that we need only cite a few more as illustrations. There was a man who could remember the first syllable of long words, but no others. A soldier, after receiving an injury in the head, forgot the figures 5 and 7, and everything connected with them. A gentleman in a similar way lost the memory of the letter F. An old French lady could express herself intelligibly in any ordinary conversation; but if a direct question were put to her, her memory seemed to depart from her at once, except in reference to two words; her regular reply was "Saint Antoine." In another case, of a wounded French soldier, he evidently understood the meaning of what was said to him by others, but his memory could only assist him to the uniform reply, "Baba." John Hunter, the great surgeon, called on a friend at a time when indisposed; for a few hours he could not remember anything concerning any person or object beyond the walls of the room he was in;

it was a painful time to him, for, without any hallucination, he knew perfectly well that his memory had in great measure temporarily deserted him; he walked to the window, as a possible means of getting back some recollection of the outer world. An artillery officer, in 1785, could read out well when a book was open before him, but could not remember a word of the contents when the book was closed. A Spanish tragic author forgot his own writings; when reminded of them, he declared they must have been written by some one else. A French scientific man could scarcely ever remember the names of his colleagues; he was accustomed to speak of them as the authors of such and such works or papers, or as the discoverers of such and such facts. One gentleman forgot the names of the whole of his children for a time. An agriculturist, a man of extensive business and good intelligence, was obliged to use a dictionary to understand the ordinary implements of his trade; the sound of each word suggested the shape of the letters, and the sight of the latter suggested the sense; but the sound did not directly suggest the sense. A lady, after an illness, forgot all pronouns, and all inflexions of verbs except the infinitive; when wishing or intending to say, "Stop, my husband has just come," she said, "To stop, husband to come."

Another variety is what may be called perversion of memory, memory running to wildness, generally manifested during or immediately after an illness. One instance is that in which we imagine other persons to be doing or feeling that which is really attributable to ourselves. There was a gentleman who, when thirsty, believed that others experienced the thirst; and after he had coughed, said to a friend near him, "I am sorry you have so bad a cough." Samuel Rogers, when very aged and declining, was riding in a carriage with a lady, who asked him about another lady well known to both; the name seemed a blank to him, and stopping the carriage, he asked his servant, "Do I know Lady M.?" "Yes, sir," was the reply. A gentleman, sitting with his wife in the evening, found his thoughts wandering back to a lady at whose house he frequently spent an evening in former years; ludicrously confounding time, place, and person, he rose up, and, addressing his wife as "madam," declared that it was getting late, and that he must return home to his family.

The forgetfulness arising from sheer absence of mind is different in its nature from any of the above. The man may be in good health, and may be the reverse of stupid, but he is so absorbed in a particular train of thought as to be nearly oblivious to surrounding sayings and doings. Sydney Smith cited two instances of absence of mind which struck his fancy. "I heard of a clergyman who went jogging along the road till he came to a turnpike. 'What is to pay?' 'Pay, sir, for what?' asked the turnpike-man. 'Why, for my horse to be sure.' 'Your horse, sir! What horse? There is no horse, sir.' 'No horse. God bless me,' said he, suddenly looking down between his legs, 'I thought I was on horseback.' Lord Dudley was one of the most absent men I think I ever met in society. One day he met me in the street and invited me to meet myself. 'Dine with me to-day; dine with me, and I will get Sydney Smith to meet you.' I admitted the temptation he held out to me, but said I was engaged to meet him elsewhere. Another time in meeting me he put his arm through mine, muttering, 'I don't mind walking with him a little way; I'll walk with him as far as the end of the street.' He very nearly upset my gravity once in the pulpit. He was sitting immediately under me, apparently very attentive, when suddenly he took up his stick as if he had been in the House of Commons, and, tapping the ground with it, cried out in a low but very audible whisper, 'Hear, hear.'" An absence of mind more or less similar has often been displayed by men habituated to deep study. Domenichino, the great Italian painter, became so absorbed in his own picture of the Martyrdom of Saint Andrew that he reviled, with the fiercest passion, a soldier who was represented insulting or mocking the saint. Caracci, who was present, was so struck with Domenichino's excited expression of face that he afterwards adopted it as an impersonation of rage. Crebillon, the French dramatist, impatiently said to a friend who entered his study, "Don't disturb me; this is a moment of exquisite happiness; I am going to hang a villanous minister, and to banish a stupid one!" Isaac D'Israeli says: "It has been told of a modern astronomer, that one summer night, when he was withdrawing to his chamber, the brightness of the heavens showed a phenomenon. He passed the whole night in observing it; and when they came to him

early in the morning, and found him in the same attitude, he said, like one who had been collecting his thoughts for a few moments, 'It must be thus; but I will go to bed before it is too late.' He had gazed the entire night in meditation, and was not aware of it." Doctor Stukely called upon Sir Isaac Newton, and was told that Sir Isaac would come to him directly. The waiting was long and tedious, dinner was brought in, and Stukely, feeling hungry, sat down and nearly demolished a tempting roast fowl. Newton at length appeared, and seeing the empty dish, exclaimed, "I protest I had forgotten that I had eaten my dinner!" The Count de Brancas, a friend of La Bruyère and Rochefoucauld, was one day reading in his study, when a nurse brought in a little infant; he put down his book, took up the infant, and caressed it admiringly. A friend came in, and Brancas threw down the baby on the table, thinking it was a book, not detecting his error until a loud crying announced it. On another occasion Rochefoucauld crossed the street to greet him. Brancas said, "God help you, my poor man!" Rochefoucauld smiled, and was about to speak, when the other interrupted him: "I told you that I had nothing for you; there is no use in your teasing me; why don't you try to get work? Such lazy idlers as you make the streets quite disagreeable." Rochefoucauld's hearty laugh at length roused him from his reverie. Men have been known to exhibit such instances of absence of mind as the following: Taking out a watch, looking at it, and then asking, "What's o'clock?" Going to a house where friends have lived, and forgetting that they had removed; going up to dress for dinner, forgetting the main purpose in view, and getting into bed instead; taking imaginary pinches of snuff while talking, forgetting all the time that the box is empty. Dante went once into a bookseller's shop to witness a grand street procession. He became so absorbed in a book that the whole spectacle passed without his noticing it; and when he went home was surprised at being reminded of it. Hogarth, dining one day with friends, rose in the middle of dinner, turned his chair round, sat down with his back to the company, meditated awhile, resumed his proper position, and went on with his dinner. Sheridan, conversing with his sister one day, unconsciously cut up into shreds an elegant pair of ruffles which she had just

made for her father. A gentleman, invited to dinner, sat in the drawing-room alone for awhile; by the time the lady of the house appeared, she found that he, in a brown study, had picked a hearth-brush to pieces; he had the denuded handle in his hand, while his dress was covered with hairs.

"COME, THE RECORDERS!"

AMONG the earlier emotions of the youthful playgoer, whose enthusiasm for dramatic representations is generally of a very fervid and uncompromising kind, must be recognised his pity for the money-taker, forbidden by the cares of office to witness a performance, and his envy of the musicians, so advantageously stationed for the incessant enjoyment of the delights of the theatre. But he perceives, with regretful wonder, that these gentlemen are habitually negligent of their opportunities, and fail to appreciate the peculiar happiness of their position; that they are apt, indeed, their services not being immediately required, to abandon their instruments, and quietly to steal away through the cramped doorway that admits to the mysterious regions beneath the stage. He is grieved to note that for them, at any rate, the play is *not* "the thing." One or two may remain—the performer on the drum, I have observed, is often very faithful in this respect, though I have failed to discover any special reason why a love of histrionic efforts should be generated by his professional occupation—but the majority of the orchestra clearly manifest an almost indecent alacrity in avoiding all contemplation of the displays on the other side of the foot-lights. They are but playgoers on compulsion. They even seem sometimes, when they retain their seats, to prefer gazing at the audience rather than at the actors, and thus to advertise their apathy in the matter. And I have not heard that the parsimonious manager, who proposed to reduce the salaries of his musicians on the ground that they every night enjoyed admission to the best seats, for which they paid nothing, "even when stars were performing," ever succeeded in convincing his band of the justice of his arguments.

The juvenile patron of the drama will, of course, in due time become less absorbed in his own view of the situation, and learn that, just as one man's meat is another man's poison, so the pleasures of some are

the pains of others. He will cease to search the faces of the orchestra for any evidence of "pride of place," or enjoyment of performances they witness, not as volunteers, but as pressed men. He will understand that they are at work, and are influenced by a natural anxiety to escape from work as soon as may be. So, the overture ended, they vanish, and leave the actors to do their best or their worst, as the case may be. But our young friend's sentiments are not peculiar to himself—have been often shared, indeed, by very experienced persons. We have heard of comic singers and travelling entertainment givers who have greatly resented the air of indifference of their musical accompanist. They have required of him that he should feel amused, or affect to feel amused, by their efforts. He has had to supplement his skill as a musician by his readiness as an actor. It has been thought desirable that the audience should be enabled to exclaim: "The great So-and-So *must* be funny! Why, see the man at the piano, who plays for him every night, who has, of course, seen his performance scores and scores of times, even *he* can't help laughing, the great So-and-So is so funny." The audience, thus convinced, find themselves, no doubt, very highly amused. Garrick himself appears, on one occasion, at any rate, to have been much enraged at the indifference of a member of his band. Cervetto, the violoncello-player, once ventured to yawn noisily and portentously while the great actor was delivering an address to the audience. The house gave way to laughter. The indignation of the actor could only be appeased by Cervetto's absurd excuse that he invariably yawned when he felt "the greatest rapture," and to this emotion the address to the house, so admirably delivered by his manager, had justified him in yielding. Garrick accepted the explanation, perhaps rather on account of its humour than of its completeness.

Music and the drama have been inseparably connected from the most remote date. Even in the cart of Thespis some corner must have been found for the musician. The custom of chanting in churches has been traced to the practice of the ancient and pagan stage. Music pervaded the whole of the classical drama, was the adjunct of the poetry: the play being a kind of recitation, the declamation composed and written in notes, and the gesticulations even being accompanied. The old miracle plays were assisted by per-

formers on the horn, the pipe, the tabret, and the flute; a full orchestra, in fact. Mr. Payne Collier, in his *Annals of the Stage*, points out that at the end of the prologue to *Childermas Day*, 1512, the minstrels are required to "do their diligence," the same expression being employed at the close of the performance when they are besought either themselves to dance, or to play a dance for the entertainment of the company:

Also ye menstrelles doth your diligence
Afore our depertying geve us a daunce.

The Elizabethan stage relied greatly upon the aid of trumpets, cornets, &c., for the "soundings" which announced the commencement of the prologue, and for the "alarums" and "flourishes" which occurred in the course of the representation. Malone was of opinion that the band consisted of some eight or ten musicians stationed in "an upper balcony over what is now called the stage-box." Collier, however, shows that the musicians were often divided into two bands, and quotes a stage direction in Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*, 1602: "While the measure is dancing, Andrugio's ghost is placed betwixt the music houses." In a play of later date, Middleton's *Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, 1630, appears the direction: "While the company seem to weep and mourn, there is a sad song in the music room." Boxes were then often called rooms, and one was clearly set apart for the use of the musicians. In certain of Shakespeare's plays the musicians are clearly required to quit their room for a while, and appear upon the stage among the *dramatis personæ*.

The practice of playing music between the acts is of long standing, the frequent inappropriateness of these interludes having been repeatedly commented on, however. A writer in the last century expressly reports that at the end of every act, the audience, "carried away by a jig of Vivaldi's or a concerto of Giardini's, lose every warm impression relative to the piece, and begin again cool and unconcerned as at the commencement of the representation." He advocates the introduction of music adapted to the subject: "The music after an act should commence in the tone of the preceding passion, and be gradually varied till it accords with the tone of the passion that is to succeed in the next act," so that "cheerful, tender, melancholy, or animated impressions" may be inspired as the occasion may need. At the conclusion of the second act of Gammer Gurton's Needle,

1566, Diccon, addressing himself to the musicians, says simply, "In the mean time, fellows, pipe up your fiddles." But in a later play, the *Two Italian Gentlemen*, by Anthony Munday, printed about 1584, the different kinds of music to be played after each act are stated, whether "a pleasant galliard," a "solemn dump," or a "pleasant allemaigne." So Marston, in his *Sophonisba*, 1606, indicates particularly the instruments he would have played during the pauses between the acts. After act one, "the cornets and organs playing loud full of music;" after act two, "organs mixed with recorders;" after act three, "organs, viols, and voices;" with "a base lute and a treble viol" after act four. In the course of this play, moreover, musical accompaniments of a descriptive kind were introduced, the stage direction on two occasions informing us that "infernal music plays softly." Nabbes, in the prologue to his *Hannibal and Scipio*, 1637, alludes at once to the change of the place of action of the drama, and to the performance of music between the acts:

The place is sometimes changed, too, with the scene,
Which is translated as the music plays
Betwixt the acts.

The closing of the theatres by the Puritans, in 1642, plainly distressed the musicians almost as much as the players. Their occupation was practically gone, although not declared illegal by Act of Parliament. "Our music," writes the author of the *Actor's Remonstrance*, 1643, "that was held so delectable and precious that they scorned to come to a tavern under twenty shillings salary for two hours, now wander with their instruments under their cloaks—I mean such as have any—into all houses of good fellowship, saluting every room where there is company with, 'Will you have any music, gentlemen?'"

At the Restoration, however, king, actors, and orchestra all enjoyed their own again. Presently, for the first time it would seem in an English theatre, the musicians were assigned that intrenched position between the pit and the stage they have ever since maintained. "The front of the stage is opened, and the band of twenty-four violins with the harpsicals and theorbos which accompany the voices are placed between the pit and the stage." So runs one of the preliminary stage directions in the version of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, arranged by Dryden and Davenant for performance at the Duke's Theatre, Lincoln's-inn-fields, in 1667. The change was, no doubt, introduced by

Davenant in pursuance of French example. The authors of the *Histoire Universelle des Théâtres* state, regarding the French stage, that after the disuse of the old chorus in 1630, "à la place du chant qui distinguoit les actes et qui marquoit les repos nécessaires, on introduisit des joueurs d'instrumens, qui d'abord furent placés sur les ailes du théâtre, où ils exécutoient différens airs avant la commencement de la pièce et entre les actes. Ensuite ils furent mis au fond des troisième loges, puis aux secondes, enfin entre le théâtre et le parterre, où ils sont restés."

Theatres differ little save in regard to their dimensions. The minor house is governed by the same laws, is conducted upon the same system, as the major one. It is as a humbler and cheaper edition, but it repeats down to minute particulars the example of its costly original. The orchestra, or some form of orchestra, is always indispensable. Even that street-corner tragedy which sets forth the story of Punch and Judy, could not be presented without its pandean-pipe accompaniment. The lowest vagrant theatre must, like the lady in the nursery ballad, have music wherever it goes. No doubt this is often of most inferior quality, suggestive of a return to very early musical methods. But poverty constrains to primitiveness. Mr. Pepys, comparing the state of the stage under Killigrew to what it had been in earlier years, notes: "Now wax candles and many of them; then not above three pounds of tallow; now all things civil, no rudeness anywhere; then as in a bear-garden; then two or three fiddlers; now nine or ten of the best," &c. The orchestra of a strolling theatre has been known to consist of one fiddler only, and he has been required to combine with his musical exertions the discharge of secretarial duties, enlivened by occasional appearances on the stage to strengthen casts, or help fill up the scene. The strollers' band is often of uncertain strength. For when the travelling company meets with misadventure the orchestra are usually the first to prove unfaithful. They are the Swiss of the troop. The receipts fail, and the musicians desert. They carry their gifts elsewhere, and seek independent markets. The fairs, the races, the country inn-doors, attract the fiddler, and he strolls on his own account, when the payment of salaries is suspended. A veteran actor was wont to relate his experiences of fifty years ago as a member of the Stratford-upon-Avon com-

pany, when the orchestra consisted only of a fife and a tambourine, the instrumentalists performing, as they avowed, "not from notes but entirely by ear." Presently the company removed to Warwick for the race week. But here the managerial difficulties increased—no band whatever could be obtained! This was the more distressing in that the performances were to be of an illegitimate character: a "famous tight-rope dancer" had been engaged. The dancer at once declared that his exhibition without music was not for a moment to be thought of. One of the company thereupon obligingly offered his services. He could play upon the violin: four tunes only. Now, provided an instrument could be borrowed for the occasion, and provided, moreover, the tight-rope artiste could dance to the tune of *There's Nae Luck, or Drink to Me Only, or Away with Melancholy*, or the *National Anthem*, here was a way out of the dilemma, and all might yet be well. Unfortunately a violin was not forthcoming at any price, and the dancer declared himself quite unable to dance to the airs stated! How was faith to be kept with the public? At the last moment a barrel-organ was secured. The organist was a man of resources. In addition to turning the handle of his instrument, he contrived to play the triangles and the pan-pipes. Here, then, was a full band. The dancer still demurred. He must be assisted by a "clown to the rope," to chalk his soles, amuse the audience while he rested, and perform other useful duties. Another obliging actor volunteered his help. He would "by special desire and on this occasion only," appear as clown. So having played Pangloss in the *Heir at Law*, the first piece, he exchanged his doctoral costume for a suit of motley, and the performance "drew forth," as subsequent playbills stated, "universal and reiterated bursts of applause from a crowded and elegant audience." The experiment of the barrel-organ orchestra was not often repeated. The band of the Leamington Theatre was lent to the Warwick house, the distance between the establishments being only two miles. The Leamington audience were provided with music at the commencement of the evening only; the Warwick playgoers dispensed with orchestral accompaniments until a later period in the performances.

The absence of an orchestra, during the recent performances in London of the company of the *Comédie Française*, probably appeared strange and unaccountable to many of our untravelled playgoers. But

the Comédie has long dispensed with all musical accompaniments. It presents the drama pure and simple. It prefers that the histrionic art should run alone, unaided by the musician. But this abstinence in the matter of music, while it is not of course a following of the method of the ancient classical stage, is not, further, one of the elder traditions of the Théâtre Français. For it is clear that the lighter comedies of Molière, such, for instance, as *Le Malade Imaginaire*, or *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, could not have been presented originally without orchestral assistance. These works indeed avowedly pertain to the "comédie-ballet" class of entertainments, and are supplied with "intermèdes," in the course of which all kinds of curious dancing and singing occur. They are plays still preserving some characteristics of the grotesque humour and buffoonery of Italian pantomime. The "intermèdes," however, and their indispensable musical accompaniments, can be readily suppressed, without injury to the works from which they spring. They are a kind of fungous growth that rather saps the vitality of, than lends support to, the parent tree. The Comédie retains these plays in its repertory by discarding altogether their ballet or musical excrescences. We may note that it was while playing in the last "intermède" of *Le Malade Imaginaire*, that Molière was seized with the convulsive fit which proved fatal within an hour of the performance.

Did the London audiences of the Comédie long for the absent music? They did not seem to do so. They were at any rate resigned to the loss. They may even be said to have had the air of those who have met with what is called "a happy release;" for, after all, the departed was perhaps quite as much a foe as a friend. And this brings us to the consideration whether the alliance between music and the drama in England need be quite so enduring and insoluble as it is at present. Is the orchestra really necessary to the existence of all our theatres? Is it adventively indispensable that every comedy should be preceded by a performance of *Fra Diavolo*, let us say, or ending provided by the execution—an aptitude accord—of a set of quadrilles that is to succed *Duchesse*, or the repetition "cheerful, teand wearisome waltz? The impressions" from the play—may not a diversion may need, permitted to avoid the second act of *Course* when dancing and of the entertainments

of the evening, the band must be retained and endured. But their presence and performance, when the accompaniments to neither song nor dance are required of them, would seem to be superfluous and redundant. They are supposed to entertain the audience during the pauses in the representation. But if they fail to do this? In many cases they exist but as creatures of tradition, of superstition, of that inveterate conservatism which hinders all amendment in theatrical matters. And, no doubt, when an absurdity or an imposture pleads its antiquity or claims to be "a vested interest," the difficulty of suppressing it becomes prodigious.

Anyhow, our orchestras might surely mend their ways. They rejoice, at present, in the performance of the most hackneyed and inappropriate music. And they play, as a rule, execrably. Their usual repertory consists of about six overtures, three sets of quadrilles, and four waltzes. It must sometimes happen that all the orchestras in London are at the same moment occupied in performing the same piece of music—the overture to *Zampa* or *Stradella* possibly. No connexion is ever maintained between the nature of the play and the character of the music. *La Dame Blanche* does as well for *Othello* as for the *School for Scandal*; *Le Domino Noir* suits *Hamlet* equally with the *Lady of Lyons*. Offenbach intrudes upon Shakespeare, and Mozart introduces a sensation dramatist. And then the noise! No wonder that audiences carry away headaches from the theatres. Surely those must have been pleasanter and more peaceful times when violins and theorbos and harpsicals constituted the orchestra. With monster bands have come monstrous instruments for creating the greatest possible amount of uproar. The small orchestra imitates the large. So in theatres little bigger than drawing-rooms—which a pianoforte could probably fill sufficiently with sound—obstreperous drums are beaten and pantomimic trumpets blare, greatly to the torture of the audience. Some reform in this matter is urgently needed. For our own part we should regard with interest any experiment which had in view at once the greater comfort of the spectators, and the encouragement of the players to rely for support upon the simple exercise of their own art. A theatre devoted to acting, and intrusting its actors with the best works obtainable, need not encumber itself with a useless orchestra. Let it be added, in conclusion,

to obviate misconception, that no slur upon music or musicians is here for a moment contemplated. We only advocate a division of theatres into musical and non-musical, into dramatic and operatic, or partially operatic.

IF.

If—it had never shone,
That sudden star so strangely dear,
With a glory that flooded her atmosphere,
With a dreamy glimmer of silvery haze,
That haloed for her the nights and days;
Why—she still had thought the soft grey sky,
With its sober seasons gliding by,
Best shelter 'neath which to live or die,
That the quiet life had known.

If—she had never seen,
That radiant flower so fresh and fair,
With a scent so luscious, a hue so rare,
To thrill the senses, to dazzle the sight,
And lull the life to a vague delight;
Why—she still had thought the rose was sweet,
Still gathered the violets at her feet,
Nor deemed all garlands incomplete,
But just where one bloom had been.

If—she had never heard,
That strain of music, lovely and wild,
Now bidding her laugh like a happy child;
Now, calling for showers of passionate tears,
Such as we weep in our early years;
Why—she still had loved the sweet old air,
That murmured of children, home, and prayer,
That breathed of all things calm and fair,
And no rebel pulses stirred.

If—it were still undreamt,
The beautiful vision she loves too well,
With a passion she vainly strives to quell,
With a passion that haunts her night and day,
With a passion 'gainst which she dares not pray;
Why—with none of this feverish ill possess,
She still had been tranquil, calm, and blest,
Like a streamlet singing in shadowed rest,
From all sunlights or storms exempt.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

LA TUDE'S ESCAPE FROM THE BASTILLE.

M. MASERS HENRI DE LA TUDE, the son of a knight of St. Louis, and lieutenant-colonel of the Orleans dragoon regiment, was born in the year 1725 at the château of Croisail, near Montagnac, in Languedoc, in the diocese of Agde. La Tude's father, made king's lieutenant of Sedan in 1733, brought him up as became the son of an old soldier of rank and position. In 1749, La Tude was sent to Paris to complete his military education as an engineer.

Louis the Fifteenth had succeeded to the throne in 1715. The European war, which had ended at Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1747, left the French with a shattered fleet and twelve hundred millions added to their debt. The debased king, wallowing in pleasure at the Parc aux Cerfs, abandoned everything to his vain and ambitious mis-

tress, Madame de Pompadour, the daughter of a government contractor, whom the nobles of the court hated, despised, and yet feared. The clergy, intent on holy persecuting the Jansenists, were exercising the most despotic power, encouraged by this Roxana of the hour, who had just dismissed M. Machault, an honest and enlightened minister, who had endeavoured to equalise taxation, and to encourage free internal trade in corn. The king had already begun to act on the fatal principle laid down by himself in a subsequent speech to his parliament: "We hold our crown from God alone; legislative power belongs to the king only, without dependence and without partition."

It was at this period of corruption that the young military student, eager to plunge into the struggle of life, arrived in Paris. Clever, ambitious, and not over-scrupulous, La Tude resolved to climb the hill of fortune by a short and dangerous cut. A smile of Madame de Pompadour secured gold, rank, favour, success to him on whom it rested. By a wild, ill-planned scheme, as daring as it was rash, La Tude resolved to win that smile, and to secure a place at the sultana's side. The proud nobles, the Jansenists, and the strict and religious of all parties, hated her with an intense and insatiable malignity. One day La Tude heard some young men, over their wine, gasconading that they would rid France of the harpy. La Tude had been told that the fear of poison embittered the life of this woman, who declared that every day at Versailles was "a battle." He at once devised an incoherent project, full of shallow and short-sighted cunning. He filled a letter with some harmless powder, and posted it to Madame de Pompadour. He then rode to Versailles, obtained an audience of the favourite, revealed the conversation he had heard, informed her he had seen a parcel posted to her, communicated his suspicions respecting it, cautioned her to be on her guard, and assured her in lavish terms of the anxiety he felt, and the great satisfaction he experienced in being able to give her intelligence so important to herself and all France, to whom she was so dear. The vain woman, living amidst false friends and open enemies, was pleased with the zeal of the young student, and, after expressing her gratitude for the attention, politely offered him her service. He left the palace, and turned his face toward Paris, enraptured at the success of his stratagem. He had won that smile

that secured wealth, power, and all for which he longed. Mathematics were only for dusty pedants; for him now, by day, the perpetual sunshine that gold lace for ever spreads through Versailles corridors; by night the sparkling starlight of court diamonds, and an opening heaven of fair and welcoming faces. So youth's dreams arise, so they pass away. The next post brought the alarming packet. The supposed poison was tried by the court physicians on several animals, old court favourites, grown old and useless. The Pompadour, with Diaphorons, and some other of Molière's medical friends, stood round, in breathless expectation to see the creatures drop dead; but no—by all the saints of Paris no; on the contrary, they waddled, gambolled, crawled, and fawned upon the cruel hands held out to them, and no harm resulted in any way, no harm but to the young Languedoc student. He had won the smile, now he felt the frown; the sky over Versailles darkened as he rode to Paris exulting, then the lightning struck him.

On the 1st of May, 1749, a stern knocking came to La Tude's door, rough hands snatched away his sword, sharp cords tied his wrists, the next morning the poor, unsuccessful, detected cheat awoke in the Bastille. The fool's paradise had changed to a dark cell, whence no voice could reach the ears of justice. The world was dead to him, and he to the world. At three-and-twenty, with a brain full of hope and ambition, he was buried alive.

In the September of the same year, La Tude, treated as a mere indiscreet lad, was removed to the castle of Vincennes, where M. Berrier, the lieutenant-general of the police, showed him every possible indulgence. He was allotted the best room, and permitted to walk two hours every day in the gardens of the château. From his windows he could see over all Paris. Below his rooms stretched a private garden, in which another favoured prisoner, a Jansenist curé, was allowed to walk with his pupils, the son of the Marquis of Châtelet's steward and the child of one of the turnkeys, and there also he was allowed to receive visitors. The sight of the two boys playing inspired La Tude with longings for liberty, and roused his ingenuity, naturally of rather a secretive kind. Exactly at two o'clock every day the elder turnkey awaited him in the garden, while the junior unlocked his door to give him temporary liberty. La Tude commenced his scheme by getting into a habit of run-

ning down fast into the garden before the junior turnkey had time to lock the upper door and follow him. On the 25th of June, 1750, the plot was ripe. Tripping down-stairs as soon as the junior turnkey came, La Tude instantly slammed the door at the bottom of the staircase, in order to muffle the man's cries and to gain time. He then knocked boldly at the outer gate and cried to the sentinel:

"Deuce take it! above two hours monsieur le curé has been waiting for the Abbé de St. Sauveur (one of the visitors); have you seen the puppy pass this way? Has he been gone long? I am on the hunt after him, and he shall pay me for this trouble."

The soldier at once opened the gate, and La Tude passed through. Another soldier, to whom he put the same hurried question, replied he knew nothing about it, and let him proceed. The third sentry, on the further side of the drawbridge, said he had not seen the abbé. La Tude replied, "I shall soon find him," and capering like a schoolboy, at four paces from the last sentinel he set up a run and brushed by him, the man not suspecting a young and beardless lad, so gay and careless, to be an escaped prisoner. In the mean time the turnkey who was locked in thundered at the door, and shouted to his companion from the garden, who instantly guessed the trick La Tude had put upon them. The first sentry, being questioned, declared he did not know La Tude by sight, and had thought he was a friend of the abbé's who had been to see the curé.

Six days after this escape, La Tude, with perfect innocence and trustfulness, through the king's physician-in-ordinary, surrendered himself to Louis the Fifteenth. He was immediately conducted to the Bastille. M. Berrier soon after came and told La Tude that the confidence he had placed in the king's clemency and goodness of heart was not misplaced. He had merely been sent to the Bastille in order to find out how he escaped from Vincennes, as only prisoners of the first quality were sent there, and it was important that the guards should be faithful. The young man describing his escape, stern M. Berrier condescended to smile, and affably asked La Tude if he had not always treated him with kindness. "As a father," was the reply; and M. Berrier then promised to give him his liberty in a few days, directly he had spoken to the marchioness. But the Pompadour was implacable in her hatred. She

was angry that La Tude had trusted the king's compassion rather than hers. She felt that the story would be another morsel for her enemies, and might make even the king suspect her of cruelty. La Tude was at once thrown into a dungeon, and left there eighteen months. At the end of that time he was brought up and placed in a common room with another of the marchioness's victims, named D'Alégre. Endless letters to M. Berrier at last brought an answer. The amiable lieutenant of police assured La Tude that his heart was not callous, that he sympathised with his misfortunes, and that he would have been long since set free, but that the woman held the reins entirely in her own hands. Any indulgence asked he would grant, and at the first change of public events both La Tude and D'Alégre were assured they should be the first persons restored to liberty, and compensated for their lost time and sufferings. Two years and six months already in darkness and solitude had been crushed out of La Tude's life, and these bland promises fell unheeded upon his ear. The Pompadour, clever and witty, might retain her hold over the king for another fifteen years; by that time his life would be half gone, and he would return to the world a boy in mind, no career open to him, his friends dead, and the world heedless of one whom it had forgotten. What hope could there be? He was shut in by walls six feet thick, and of enormous height, four iron grates at every window and up every chimney, sentries on every tower, deep trenches full of stagnant water; he had no friends to bring saws or files, no money to bribe turnkeys.

By the help of a very scarce book—the only work extant which gives us any clue or complete outline of the daily economy of the Bastille—we are enabled to sketch the detestable prison with all its towers, court-yards, and drawbridges. The volume, known and valued by Howard the philanthropist, seems to have quite escaped the observation of Mr. Carlyle, who has not used it in his fine chapter on the capture of the Bastille. The state prison was entered by a gate and an advanced corps de garde in the Rue de St. Antoine. A drawbridge and a second gloomy gate led to the governor's house, which was separated from the main prison by a ditch and a second drawbridge. A strong barrier, set with iron spikes, and with a gate of crossed palisades, divided the corps de garde from the great court, which was a parallelogram

about one hundred and twenty feet long and eighty broad. Within the barrier, on the right hand, was the barrack of the subaltern officers, the prison tailor, and two or three of the more favoured prisoners. The eight towers were De la Comte, Du Tresor, De la Chapelle, De la Bertandière, Du Puits, Du Coin, De la Basinière, and De la Liberté. The inner, or well court, was divided from the larger court by a house in which were the examination hall, the turnkeys' rooms, the kitchens, and the king's lieutenant's apartments. The well court, which was very filthy, was about twenty-five feet long and fifty broad. All round the Bastille ran a moat twenty-five feet broad, enclosed with a wall sixty feet high, with a wooden gallery, on which sentinels paced day and night. Outside the Bastille rose a detached bastion planted with trees. On the other side of the Bastille stood another bastion. Between the two bastions stretched the stone bridge of the gate of St. Antoine, with the town ditches on either side. The bridge opened on a large square fronting the Bastille, and set about with stately houses. In the cells, which were black with the smoke of centuries, and dirty and full of vermin, there was no furniture but little curtained beds and some worm-eaten chairs. The double iron doors and small loophole windows, were grated, so that little light penetrated. The prisoners were stripped of all money and valuables on entering, and an inventory given them to keep in case they were ever released. The soldiers on guard covered their faces with their hats when a new arrival passed, and in the chapel the curtains before the cellular seats were only withdrawn at the moment of the elevation of the Host. The meals were at one A.M. and seven P.M.; a pistole a day being allowed for every prisoner, the diet should have been good, but the turnkeys stole half the food, and adulterated the rest. Every quarter of an hour during the night the sentinel on duty rang a bell to prove his vigilance. The most dreaded cells in the prison were the calottes or garrets in the roofs of the towers, the dungeons below the level of the ditch, and the rooms under the cannon platforms, which were shaken almost to pieces when salutes were fired. Such was this hell upon earth into which men were thrown for the slightest offence against a royal favourite, a priest in power, or a corrupt official.

From this cruel purgatory, with walls like huge cliffs, and girt in by enemies, did

La Tude resolve to escape. It required an amount of foresight, energy, and perseverance almost supernatural. No scissors, knives, or edged tools were allowed to a prisoner in the Bastille; nor, for a hundred louis, would a turnkey have brought any culprit even a quarter of a yard of thread. No news from the outer world, not even of a king's death, reached the eight towers. The officers, surgeons, and turnkeys of the prison had but one changeless formula, "Good morning! Good evening! Do you want anything?" La Tude's father or brother might have pined for years in the room over his head, and he would never have known it. A trunk of clean linen was all he had to help him to liberty. D'Alégre laughed as he pointed with a smile to that useless store; but after seven years of thought La Tude slowly hammered out a scheme. Step by step, inch by inch, he resolved, with the patience of a coral insect, to work this scheme out. He knew too well what he required; fourteen hundred feet of cord, two ladders—one of wood, thirty feet long, another of rope, one hundred and eighty feet. It would be necessary somehow to remove the heavy iron grates from the passage of the chimney, and to bore a hole, in one night, through a wall many feet thick, at the distance of only twelve or fifteen feet from a cruelly vigilant and unbribable sentinel. With their bare hands the two must do all this. But this was not all; they must also conceal the two ladders in a small cell, that was strictly searched by the turnkeys and officers many times a week. To every suggestion La Tude's less sanguine friend replied, "Impossible, pshaw! impossible." Impossible? To energy all things are possible.

La Tude had observed that in No. 3 of the Tower de la Comte—the room over his own—there was a prisoner who never made any noise, never audibly moved his chair or table, never even coughed. He went to mass on the Sundays and Wednesdays when La Tude and his friend did. He descended first and returned last. It being necessary to examine his room, La Tude arranged a simple but effectual plan. On the return from mass, D'Alégre was to pull out his handkerchief and let it fall down stairs. One day he did so, then asked the turnkey to go down and fetch it. The moment the man was gone La Tude darted up-stairs, drew the bolt of No. 3, and glanced in; the room was nine or ten feet high. He then measured quickly three

steps of the staircase, and counted the number of steps to his own cell. He saw at once that the ceiling of his cell had been made double, and five feet thick, to muffle sound; and guessed that in all probability a similar hollow space would be found between the floor of his own cell and the ceiling of that below. When they were bolted into No. 2, La Tude's eyes sparkled; he clutched his friend's arm, and cried:

"Patience, courage, and we shall escape. The floor is hollow, we can hide our rope there."

"Rope?" said his friend, "but we could not get ten feet to save our lives."

"In that post-chaise trunk," said La Tude, pointing to the trunk, "there are twelve dozen shirts, sixteen pairs of silk stockings, twelve dozen under-stockings, five dozen drawers, six dozen napkins; unravelling these we shall have more rope than we want." D'Alégre brightened up, but again asked how the iron bars in the chimney were to be removed, as they had no chisels, no crowbars. "The hand made all instruments, and the head planned them," said La Tude; "while we have those we cannot be at a loss for resources." Then he pointed out the iron hinges of their folding tables. These, sharpened on the tiled floor, and put into handles, became working chisels, the steel for lighting their fire could be made into a knife, which would shape tool handles, and serve for a thousand other purposes. They talked about nothing else all day. Hope whispered encouragement to those poor prisoners, rendered preternaturally cunning by seven years of slavery. After supper, when the place was safe for the night (one great security in these cases), they pulled a hinge off the table, and digging a tile out of the floor, dug towards the ceiling below. In six hours they found there were two floors below, three feet apart. They then carefully replaced the tile, which presented no appearance of having been disturbed. Next day they broke the fire steel, made a knife, and cut two handles in which to insert the sharpened hinges. After that they slowly unravelled two of the shirts, drawing out thread after thread. These strings, knit together, they formed into clews of an equal length, and then divided them into two clews, fifty threads to each sixty feet. They then twisted these clews, and formed a rope about fifty-five feet long, to be from time to time added to by more unravelled linen slowly woven in the long hours of the dreary nights.

Then came the hard task of wrenching the iron bars out of the chimney. To accomplish this they fastened their rope ladders with heavy weights, and, supported on them, worked at the bars. In a few months every bar was loosened and ready to be removed, but still left in its original socket. It was hard work. Every day the two men descended with bleeding hands, and so bruised that they could not recommence work below till after an hour or two's rest. The bars removed, there was still a wooden ladder required to ascend from the moat to the sentinel's gallery, the only way to the governor's garden, and beyond that to liberty. They had no saw to cut the firewood, eighteen inches long, daily supplied to them. The hinges would not saw through billets. In a few hours these ingenious men, with an iron candlestick and the other half of the fire steel, had made an excellent saw, which in twenty minutes would cut through a log as thick as a man's leg. With knife and saw they pared and shaped the billets into steps for the ladder, with joints to fix in one another, and holes to receive the cross-bars. They also made a pair of compasses, a square, a reel, blocks, and every requisite for their escape, all of which were, of course, concealed between the two convenient floors. They had also given every one of their implements a secret name, such as Faunus for the saw, Polyphemus for the floor, Jacob for the ladder, Dove for the rope, Anubis for the reel, Tubal Cain for the hinges, and the rule was that the man nearest the door, hearing the turnkey's foot on the stairs, instantly called out the cipher for the special object to be concealed, as the turnkeys sometimes by daytime entered the room unexpectedly. There not being wood enough, the ladder was only a pole twenty feet long, in which were twenty bars, thrust through six inches on each side, every round being pegged in and bound with thread to prevent its slipping. At last the ladder and rope were both ready and hidden snug in the cave of Polyphemus. It was evident to La Tude that the rope ladder would so vibrate, as they descended the vast perpendicular wall, as to turn the man using it giddy with fear. They therefore wove a second rope, three hundred feet long, or twice the height of the tower. This rope was to pass through a fixed pulley, and by this second rope the man above and below would be able to regulate and aid his comrade's descent, and render it steadier and less perilous.

They also made shorter cords to lash the block to a cannon, or some safe projection. Altogether, they had four hundred feet of cord. They then made, week after week, two hundred steps for the rope ladder, and, to prevent the cords rattling against the towers, they bound them with strips from the lining of their bedgowns and under-waistcoats. These preparations cost them eighteen months' work, nearly night and day.

All these things were needed to ascend the chimney and the platform of the tower, thence to descend one hundred and eighty feet to the moat, and climb up from there to the parapet into the governor's garden, then again to descend into the great outer moat, and to climb over the gate of St. Antoine. With all these precautions one thing was indispensable, and that was something no care could secure—a suitable night; for if rain, storm, and darkness lured them out, and then it grew fine, the sentinel would be sure to see them, and they would either be shot, or dragged back to solitary dungeons, there to pine till the detested woman died. But even for this difficulty La Tude in some degree provided. He calculated that the overflow of the Seine had corroded the mortar of the outer wall, and that it could be perforated with a rude gimlet he could manufacture from the screw of his bedstead, and so he might, with iron bars, force a passage into the outer street. Making, therefore, wrappers for these iron bars, and in spite of the water being four feet deep in both moats, they resolved to start on the evening of February the 25th, 1756. La Tude, knowing they would get soaked in the moats, took with him the singular encumbrance of a portmanteau filled with two complete suits of clothes. Next day, immediately after dinner, they fitted up the rope ladder, and hid it under their beds that it might not be seen by the turnkey who brought in supper. They then fitted up the cross-staff ladder, and made up their other implements into bundles; and as the officer had searched them both that morning they felt safe. They also removed the iron bars from the chimney, and put them into wrappers. They took with them a bottle of spirits in case they should have to work in the water. The moment had arrived; directly the turnkey, who had brought supper, closed the door, La Tude, though he had rheumatism in one arm, began to climb the chimney, but with no sack over his head, and no wrappers for

the elbows and loins, such as sweeps then used. Blinded with soot, flayed at the elbows and knees, black and streaming with blood, he emerged at last. Says M. La Tude, to use his own words :

"Finally I got to the top of the chimney, where I placed myself astride, and from thence unwound a ball of packthread that I had in my pocket, and to the end of which my companion had agreed to fasten the strongest rope that held my portmanteau ; by this means I drew it up, and lowered it on the platform. I returned the rope, to which my companion tied the wooden ladder. I drew up, in the same manner, the two iron bars, and the rest of the parcels for which we had occasion. When I had these, I again let down my packthread to raise the rope ladder, drawing up to myself the superfluous length, that by the end my companion might mount the chimney with more facility than I had done ; and at his signal I fastened it. He ascended with ease ; we finished drawing up the remainder, and suspended the whole in such a manner across the chimney, that we descended both at once on the platform, serving for a counterpoise to each other.

"Two horses would not have been able to remove all our luggage. We began with rolling up our rope ladder, which made a coil five feet high, and a foot thick, and we wheeled this kind of millstone to the tower of the Treasury, which we thought most favourable for our descent. We fastened this ladder securely to a piece of cannon, and then let it gently down into the trench. In the same manner we fastened our block, passing through it the rope three hundred and sixty feet long ; and when we had moved aside all our other parcels, I tied my thigh securely to the rope of the block, got on the ladder, and, in proportion as I descended its steps, my comrade let out the rope of the block ; but, notwithstanding this precaution, every time I moved, my body resembled a kite dancing in the air, so that, had this happened by daylight, of a thousand persons who might have seen me reeling, not one but would have given me over for lost ; yet I arrived safe and sound in the trench. Immediately my companion lowered to me my portmanteau, the iron bars, the wooden ladder, and all our equipage, which I placed in the dry, on a little rising above the surface of the water, at the foot of the tower. My companion next fastened the rope of the block, at the other end, above his knee, and, when he had given me a

signal of his being on the ladder, I performed the same manœuvre below which he had done for me above, to sustain me in the air, and prevent a fall. I took the further precaution to place the last step under my thighs, by sitting on it, to spare him the disagreeable vibration which I had experienced. He got down to me, though, during the whole time, the sentinel could not be above thirty feet from us, walking on the corridor, as it did not rain ; which prevented our mounting thither, to get into the garden, according to our first plan. We were therefore obliged to make use of our iron bars. I took the gimlet, and carried one of the bars on my shoulder, and my companion the other. Neither did I forget to pocket the bottle of usquebaugh ; and we proceeded directly to the wall that parts the trench of the Bastille from that of the gate of St. Antoine, between the garden and the governor's house. There was in this place a small trench, six feet wide, and about the same depth, which wetted us up to the armpits.

"At the moment that I began with my gimlet to bore a hole between two stones, to insert our levers, the major's round passed us with the great lantern, on a long pole, but ten or twelve feet at most over our heads. To conceal ourselves, we stood up to the chin in water, and when they were gone, I soon made two or three small holes with my gimlet, and in a short time we got a large stone out. From that instant I pledged myself to D'Alégre for our success ; drank a draught on the occasion, and made him take another ; we then attacked a second and a third stone. The second watch passed us, and we again slipped into the water up to our chin. We were obliged to perform this ceremony regularly every half-hour that we were disturbed by that cursed watch. Before midnight we had displaced two wheelbarrows of stones."

Once when La Tude stood by the rubbish, the sentinel stopped and spat twice on his head. La Tude fancied he had been seen, but the sentinel passed on in his patrol. D'Alégre then proposed a nip of spirits, and freshened by that, they worked for several hours at the breach till it grew large enough. The wall was four and a half feet thick. La Tude instantly made D'Alégre get through while he fetched the portmanteau. They left their ladders, &c., gladly behind, stepped down into the dry moat, and were free.

Yet even here dangers still awaited them. Sixty steps from the moat, on the road to

Bercey, the two men, carrying the portmanteau between them, fell, in the darkness, into an aqueduct six feet deep and five feet wide. D'Alégre, frightened in his first alarm, dropped the portmanteau, and clung to La Tude, who, jerking him off, clung to the other side, and dragged out his friend by the hair of his head. Afterwards, they scrambled out the portmanteau, which luckily floated. The horrors of that dreadful night had ended. The two friends embraced each other, and fell on their knees to thank God for their deliverance from so many perils. All had gone well. The clothes had escaped the wet, and, cold and shivering, the two men helped each other to dress. As they emerged from the moat it struck four o'clock. They took the first hackney-coach they met, and La Tude not finding his friend M. Silhouette, chancellor of the Duke of Orleans, at Versailles, they both fled for refuge to the abbey of St. Germain des Prez. After hiding a month, he and D'Alégre, disguised as peasants, made separately for the frontier. D'Alégre was arrested at Brussels, La Tude, in June, at Amsterdam.*

Reconsigned to the Bastille, La Tude was thrown into a dungeon, chained hand and foot, and had only straw for a bed. Still ingenious, hopeful, and persevering, the poor prisoner made a flageolet out of a reed, and tamed the rats which frequented his cell. He also wrote on cakes of dried bread, with his blood, schemes of reform that might be useful to the government, and excite their pity. Père Griffet, the confessor of the Bastille, at last touched by his sufferings, procured him paper and ink to write petitions. In 1758, he devised a plan for adding to the army twenty-five thousand men. In the same year he proposed to prevent bankruptcies by establishing public granaries. This plan was somehow to add twelve millions to the French revenue. In 1762, he wrote to Madame de Pompadour, who was still inflexible: "I have suffered fourteen years; let all be buried for ever in the blood of Jesus. Madame, be a woman, feel some pity for my tears, and those of a poor desolate mother seventy years old." But the woman had no mercy, she turned away her cruel face, and passed on to the ball-room, that echoed with music—music that drowned the recollection of such men's

groans. Restless at invention, La Tude now contrived to write on scraps of paper, which blew from his barred window to the house of some ladies in the Rue de St. Antoine, who, one April morning, in 1764, showed at their window a piece of paper, on which was written, in large characters:

YESTERDAY, THE 17TH, DIED MADAME THE
MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR.

La Tude at once wrote to the minister asking for his liberty. On his refusing to name his informant, he was again thrown into a dungeon, and in August was removed in chains to Vincennes. One foggy day in November, 1765, La Tude, while walking in the fosse, pushed through his guards, disarmed a sentinel, and escaped. Trusting to the mercy of the minister Choiseul, with untiring hopefulness, La Tude was seized and reconsigned to his Vincennes dungeon. On the accession of Louis the Sixteenth, Malesherbes became interested in La Tude, but was told that he was mad. La Tude was then sent to Charenton for two years, finally released, and banished from Paris. Foolish enough to return, he was thrown into the Châtelet, and in 1777 sent to a dungeon in Bicêtre. At the prison deliverances at the birth of the Dauphin, the Cardinal Rohan (afterwards entangled with the fatal diamond necklace), found La Tude ten feet under ground, his beard a foot and a half long, his clothes rags, his food bread and water; but, assured he was mad, the cardinal passed on to his court intrigues. A memorial of La Tude's sufferings, written by him at the request of a president of the Tournelle, was lost by a careless or drunken commissionnaire. Providence, however, threw it into the hands of a Madame le Gros, who found it lying in the mud in the Rue des Fosses, St. Germain l'Auxerrois. She was a warm-hearted and energetic woman, and set herself heart and soul to the task of releasing this victim of despotism. She won the wife of the Swiss of the Cardinal Rohan, then his secretary, at last the gay cardinal, then M. la Tour Dupin, next Madame Neckar. The Revolution was letting light into many dungeons. La Tude was at last liberated, March the 18th, 1784, but banished, with a small pension, to Montagnac. Of this exile brave Madame le Gros also obtained the revocation, and the same year the French Academy bestowed on her the Montyon prize of virtue. After the capture of the Bastille, La Tude became the lion of the hour, and a text for patriotic speeches. His papers, ladders, and tools

* Poor D'Alégre was destined to a sad end. In 1777, La Tude was taken to the madhouse at Charenton, and shown his friend, who was incurably insane. La Tude reminded him of their wonderful escape, but his only reply was, "No, I am God."

were exhibited, with his portrait, in a court of the Louvre. In 1792 he received a gift from the Assembly of three thousand francs, and in 1793 obtained a judgment against the heirs of Madame de Pompadour of sixty thousand livres, but of this sum he never touched more than ten thousand livres. He wrote his Memoirs, and in 1799 a plan of financial reform, and a scheme of saving the Republic in three months. The idol of a day then sank into entire oblivion, and died in 1805, aged eighty. After all the dungeon does not seem adverse to longevity.

The most affecting paragraph of this poor man's autobiography is the following, and it reads like a cry from the wretch Sterne saw counting the notches on the stick :

"I have groaned thirty-five years of my life in prison. Yet, while I implore the compassion of mankind, I can hardly persuade myself that I am of the same species, it is so long since I have lived among them. . . . Yes, I have languished twelve thousand and sixty-three days in different prisons. In those days, which appeared so long, I lay stretched on straw without covering, tormented by odious reptiles, reduced to a mere pittance of bread and water. I have groaned three thousand and sixty-seven days in the damp gloom and infection of dungeons, and twelve hundred and eighteen of those days, or rather endless nights of horror, my hands and feet have been bruised and torn by fetters. Such a length of torments would be thought a punishment too excessive for the most guilty criminal. Yet I was but a youth, who had appeared for a moment in society, and was allowed by all to have been the most gentle, patient, and resigned of men."

After narratives of suffering like these, can there be people who still ask, with inquiring wonder, "What were the causes of the French Revolution?"

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LXXXIV. LIGHT.

"How d'ye do, Doctor Malkin?" said Mr. Damian, with a short nod. "I called at Roydon Hall to-day, only an hour after you had left it. How d'ye do, Antomarchi?" Antomarchi had walked up to him, and extended his hand, which Damian took, and shook civilly, but with no great energy. "I have come here to-day," he continued, "about Miss Vernon's case; I'm not quite satisfied about it. I ought to have stayed perhaps to see her. We could then have

consulted. But it seemed on the statement a very clear case. Had I known that her family were divided on the point, I should have thought twice."

"I can't say *that*," said Antomarchi, promptly. "There is no division of the family, sir; but one dissident, an old lady, Miss Medwyn, who said her say here, and nothing in it. Mr. Dawe is no relation, Mr. Marston is none; although I'm told he would have no objection to become one."

"I had a letter from Mr. Dawe this morning," said Mr. Damian.

"He's a very strong partisan," observed Antomarchi, with a satirical smile.

"Yes," acquiesced Damian, and turned to Malkin. "You recollect, sir, the substance of your statement?" said Damian. "May I put two or three questions to you upon it?"

Damian sat down, and he and Malkin had a short talk; and Damian thanked him in a gentle abstraction, like a man who is meditating on the materials of a hypothesis.

A few minutes later, Doctor Malkin had taken his leave, and was on his way to the railway.

Damian was still sitting in his cloak, his white head leaning on his hand, thinking. On a sudden looking up, he said gently:

"We may as well see the young lady now."

"Don't you think, sir, it may be a little late?" suggested Antomarchi.

Damian looked at his watch.

"I think not; only a quarter past eight," said he. "Let the young lady decide. I will send the message. We can see her in the office."

"Thither they went.

"I am very glad on my own account you have come, sir. I was glad to have even Mr. Dawe, the other day; when a question is raised, it is not pleasant to be quite alone."

"I'm sure of it," said Damian.

He touched the office-bell, and told the servant to send Mr. Darkdale to him.

He charged that officer with his message to Miss Vernon; and when he had gone, he sent for the "register" and the "ledger" of the establishment.

"You will see in the ledger a reference to a letter of Lady Vernon's, it is intended only for *your* eye and mine."

"In the ledger? You mean the register, I suppose," said Damian.

"No—the ledger," said Antomarchi, coolly.

"Then it refers to terms," said Damian.

"Certainly; this is it."

He had taken from the office desk a letter, which looked more like a law paper, folded attorney fashion, and he placed it on the ledger which had been laid before Damian.

At this moment the door opened, and Miss Vernon, followed by Mercy Creswell, came in.

The young lady was looking pale and ill.

Damian stood up, and received her with a bow, courteously, and, taking her by the hand, he led her to a chair.

"Don't be frightened, Miss Vernon," he said. "I merely want to talk a little with you, and to ask you how you are; I assure you there is nothing to make you the least uncomfortable in anything that has passed between Doctor Automarchi and me. Therefore, you must not be nervous; and if you would prefer to-morrow, any time, we can put off our little conversation. Or we can repeat it as often as you please; so that should you feel nervous or put out at one time, you will not be so at another; and I will make every allowance for a little flurry and embarrassment."

"I should much rather you asked me any questions you please, now; but not here."

"And why not here?" he asked, with a smile.

"I can't answer collectedly while Doctor Automarchi fixes his eyes on me; I am nervous while I am in the same room."

Automarchi smiled faintly and shrugged, looking at Damian.

"Perhaps, Automarchi, you would kindly leave us for a little——"

"Certainly," he exclaimed with sudden alacrity, and another little shrug; and so he left the room.

Then Damian, not looking at her otherwise than a well-bred old gentleman might, began to tell her of his journey, and fifty other things, and so drew her into talk; and now and then, adroitly, he insinuated a question; and after fifteen minutes or so, at the end of their interview, he said:

"You will be glad to hear I have no objection to your seeing Miss Medwyn, or any other friend who may call; you may write to any one you please, and your letters shall reach you without being opened. Your stay here will be a short one."

Old Mr. Damian, wrinkled, haggard, grey, as he spoke these words, looked, she thought, like an angel of light. She could have dropped on her knees, and kissed his feet. He talked a little more, encouragingly and kindly. Maud could say nothing; she was crying.

By his direction Mercy Creswell returned; and to her he put many questions; all which she answered with the directness of fear. So she, in turn, was dismissed.

A few minutes more and he was sitting there alone, in deep thought. Presently he touched the bell, and sent for Automarchi.

"Where is the letter you spoke of? Oh, here," said Damian.

He put on his glasses, untied the red tape, and opened the paper.

"This is an agreement," he observed.

He drew back his head a little from it, as if he had seen a centipede or a wasp on the page. He knit his brows and held it closer to the candle, and his countenance darkened as he read on; and when he had come to the end, with the same severe aspect, he read it over again more rapidly, and threw it down on the table. Then he looked to the index of the huge ledger, and opened at the folio indicated as that containing the account of Lady Vernon of Roydon, for her daughter, Miss Maud Guendoline Vernon, for residence, expenses, advice, &c. &c. He let the ledger shut with a heavy slap, and took a turn or two in silence up and down the room. At last he stopped at the other side of the table, looking stern and pale, and said:

"The evidence in Miss Vernon's case looks very well on paper; but it won't stand the test. I saw Lady Vernon to-day. She could not evade my questions. Those threats of suicide melt into mere follies of temper. I have examined Creswell respecting the alleged threat and attempt here. That was temper also. The girl had no more real idea of killing herself than Creswell had. If I had not believed her mother's testimony on the point of suicide, I should have insisted on evidence of more developed symptoms than are set out in the statement. You observe there is no pretence of any delusion?"

Automarchi assented and said:

"That is not necessary to constitute insanity."

"No, quite right," said Damian. "We have had here too many cases of melancholia, of mania, in its slighter degrees—and of suicidal mania fully developed—to require the presence of delusion as a test. But there is no impulse to suicide here. The evidence of Elihu Lizard without this is not enough. It is explained away by the statement, very clear and sensible, of Miss Medwyn, which reached me last night in a letter from Mr. Dawe,

and I am informed that Elihu Lizard is in custody, the judge before whom he appeared in a will case having directed a prosecution for perjury against him. Lastly, I have had a long conversation with the young lady. It has satisfied me. She shall leave this forthwith."

Antomarchi smiled, but his face darkened.

"I am very glad, sir, you take so decided a view. I told Mr. Steele, and all Miss Vernon's friends, that I should be for my part only too glad to be relieved of the responsibility. It is an ugly case."

"It was not an ugly case," said old Damian, sternly, "until that letter was written and received. Has it been acted upon?"

"There has been the outfit, and the furniture and decoration."

"How much money has been paid?"

"Two thousand five hundred pounds."

"Five thousand a year for the maintenance of one girl!"

"With servants and carriage for her exclusive use," said Antomarchi,

"All which would not have cost us seven hundred a year," added Damian. "I wish I had known of the existence of that letter to-day," and Damian struck the knuckles of his open hand upon it sharply, "and I should have held different language to my Lady Vernon."

He turned and resumed his impatient walk up and down the room.

"If I had thought it the least excessive, I should have been the last man to agree to it, sir," said Antomarchi, coldly.

"It can't bear the light," said Damian. "It is a very black case."

"You'll please not to apply such terms to anything I have sanctioned," said Antomarchi. "I suppose we are to do something more than simply pay expenses here? I rather think we have a right to profits; and, considering all our labour and responsibilities, large profits too. I might have hid that letter from you if I had been what you, I think, dare not insinuate."

He might have added that he had seriously thought of doing so, but rejected it as too hazardous a game.

"I have passed through life with honour," continued Damian. "To think that my house and name should be abused to such a purpose!"

Antomarchi's pale face glared angrily after the old man as he walked toward the upper end of the room.

"It is the right course," mused Damian, gloomily, to himself. "I have been long enough here. I think I shall relinquish it."

Antomarchi heard these words with a presentiment that the retirement which he had long looked forward to was imminent.

After an interval, Damian arrested his walk opposite to Antomarchi, and looking him sternly in the face, he said:

"I shall break up this establishment."

"Break it up? Transfer it, I fancy, you mean," remarked Antomarchi.

"Transfer it; to whom?" said Damian.

"To me, of course," answered Antomarchi, doggedly.

"Certainly not," answered the old man; "we part, you and I, forthwith."

"You'll think twice, before you try that," said Antomarchi, his black beard and brows looking blacker as his face whitened and his eyes gleamed with fury. "See, old man; I have given many of the best years of my life to maintaining your enormous revenues, and, by my priceless exertions, supporting your undeserved reputation. I have no notion of being sold by your caprice. I'm a partner, and if you presume intentionally to hurt the business of this concern to the value of a guinea, I'll make you repent it."

"My powers, under our deed, are clear; I mean to act upon them," said Damian, with cold decision.

"You mean to say that letter is a covenant to bribe us; that I have sold myself to a conspiracy, of which Lady Vernon is the mainspring, and her daughter the victim, and that your superior conscience or delicacy interposes to save her?" demanded Antomarchi.

Damian made him no answer.

"If you seriously meditate what you say, you have lost your head, and as your partner I shall look after my property, and see that you are restrained from inflicting the injury you meditate. I have more lines of defence and attack than you are, perhaps, prepared for." Antomarchi smiled with a baleful eye on the resolute old man, as he said this. "You have taken the letter," he added; "you will be good enough to replace it in the office desk."

"One moment," said Damian, who had been writing a few lines on two sheets of note-paper, and now rose and touched the bell. He desired the servant to send Mr. Darkdale, who forthwith was there.

"Take this copy, Mr. Darkdale, and compare, as I read the original aloud: Doctor Antomarchi, this is addressed to you." And he read aloud a formal notice of the dissolution of partnership, which he then handed to Antomarchi.

"And take notice, Mr. Darkdale," said

Antomarchi, "original and copy are no better than waste paper."

"To-night, or to-morrow, which you please, you shall have a cheque for the liquidated sum to which, on retirement, you are entitled by the deed," said old Damian.

"You expect to get out of all this, sir," said Antomarchi, with a sarcastic laugh, as Damian withdrew with the grim formality of a bow, "on particularly easy terms."

Antomarchi was not a devil to be easily cast out. His cool and vigorous head was already scheming mischief.

In the mean time, having learned that Miss Medwyn was in the waiting-room, Damian proceeded thither, and having heard her request, instantly granted it; shook Mr. Marston by the hand, and added:

"I have carefully considered Miss Vernon's case, and I am perfectly clear that she is, and always has been, of perfectly sound mind."

After immense jubilation and many tears from Miss Medwyn, came the happy thought.

"And she may leave this, with me, to-night?"

"I see no objection; but you must give me a letter to say that you receive her only till her proper guardians shall have made their wishes known."

CHAPTER LXXXV. THE ANTE-CHAMBER.

I NEED not trouble you with details. That night Maud Vernon was free, and slept under the roof of the pleasant Hermitage.

Charles Marston passed the night at the Star and Garter, at Wybourne, whence he popped in upon the party at breakfast.

Never was so happy a breakfast; never was known, before or since, so delightful a ramble as followed, among the self-same grassy slopes and lordly trees, near the ivy-bound walls and arches of the ruined manor-house of Wybourne, among which Charles Marston had on a tumultuously happy afternoon, in the early summer, avowed his love for the beautiful stranger, who was resolved to remain a mystery.

Let us leave them to their happy recollections and foolish talk, and follow a less romantic rambler to his destination.

Mr. Dawe had driven through the town of Roydon the day before. His carriage pulled up at the door of Doctor Malkin. But the physician was making a visit to Lady Vernon, preliminary to his departure for Glarewoods.

So Mr. Dawe, changing his plans, decided on taking Mr. Tintern first.

He had some difficulty in finding him. He was taking a furious walk in his wide plantations, switching the heads off nettles, kicking the withered cones of the pines when they came in his way, and talking fiercely to himself. He found him, at last, in the depths of his solitudes of pine and larch.

Mr. Tintern knew nothing about the "young people," and desired to know nothing. He hoped he might never see his daughter's face again. He hoped they might come to the workhouse, and he had many other pleasant things to say in the same vein.

Mr. Dawe talked as if he took an interest in the young man, and confessed that he intended doing something handsome for him, if Mr. Tintern would contribute in a fair proportion; and now came Mr. Tintern's bleak and furious confession of ruin, as he stood white under the black shadow of his pine-trees, shaking his walking-cane in his clenched fist in the face of an imaginary persecutor, and making the brown colonnades of his sober trees ring with threats, and boasts, and blasphemies; and then the thin old coxcomb, overcome by self-commiseration, on a sudden broke down, and began to cry hysterically.

"I say it's awful; you ought to consider; it was you who brought that damned fellow down here; and he has been more than half the ruin of me; and now that the thing is past cure, I think you are bound to use your influence with Lady Vernon to exercise her power of appointment under the will in my favour. It would enable me to do what you wish—for I could raise money on it, and she might as well do that, as give it to strangers, or let it go to charitable institutions, that no one cares about. I wish you would—won't you? Do, like a good fellow; promise me; and, upon my soul, if I get it, I'll make whatever settlements you ask me, in reason. You may believe me; by Heaven I will."

Perhaps Mr. Dawe was thinking in the same direction, for he grunted rather in the tone of assent. And having heard enough of Mr. Tintern's declamation, and observing that the sun was near the horizon, he took his leave, simply promising to see what could be done, and so made his escape. The conversation had never once touched upon the situation of Miss Vernon. Mr. Tintern was absorbed, for the present, by his last and greatest misfortune.

It was too late, by the time Mr. Dawe

reached the town of Roydon, to think of going up to the Hall, to try whether Lady Vernon would see him. He therefore put up for the night at the Vernon Arms, and next day walked up to Roydon Hall.

Mr. Dawe, with his usual forethought, had come provided with a note, at which, he thought, her doors would most likely open to him; and while the servant took it to his mistress he stood upon the steps, looking down the avenue, between the double files of lordly trees, whose foliage was already thinned and yellowed in the suns and winds of autumn.

That queer little black-wigged man had, perhaps, his feeling for the picturesque, as handsomer people have. He had paid more than you would have thought for the exquisite little landscapes that hung upon his walls at East Mauling. I should not wonder if he had his secret poetry, and deeper still, his secret romance. It is hard to say what may be in a man so reserved as he, and so sensitive that he takes vows of silence, and wears the habit of a cynic.

The footman now came to say that Lady Vernon will see him, and he follows, not to his left, as he enters, where, at the front of the house, lie the long suite of drawing-rooms, but to the right, beyond the shield-room, where, at the rear, a different suite of rooms is placed.

Into one of these he is shown; a square room with a single window, through which you see the funeral yew worked into cloistered walls and arches, and a sombre tree standing near, which keeps the room in perpetual shadow. The heavy curtains hide part of the window, and increase the gloom. Some bygone Vernon seems to have got up this apartment under a caprice of melancholy.

There are three pictures, with something depressing in each. The first, a landscape; a cold, frowning forest glade, that looks as if sun had never shone there, nor bird sung in its leaves. Such a forest as Dante may have seen, with a black marble tomb with sombre weeds drooping over it, near the front, and a solitary figure like a shadow gliding away among the trees into the darker distance. Opposite the window is a fine picture of Cleopatra fainting, with the asp to her bosom. And at the right, scarcely the depth of a step, between the floor and the lower end of the frame, hangs

a large repulsive painting of the death of Sapphira. It is powerful, but odious. She lies distorted on the oak flooring, a bit of carpet, with Dutch anachronism, torn in her convulsion from the nails in the boards, is in her dead hand, her jaw fallen, her eyes all white; almost the only light in the picture is that one beam which strikes on the bald head of Peter, who looks ferocious as a brigand. The "young man," who are stooping to carry her out, smile like ghouls, and behind, row after row, till they disappear in the deepening shadow, the spectators, like ghosts awaiting judgment, stand with dim long faces, white and horror-stricken.

He has time enough to examine these saturnine old pictures, and has more than once peeped at his watch.

At length the thin figure of Latimer, in her accustomed black silk, appears in the doorway close beside the evil-minded "young men," and the corpse in the shadow; and she looks like a lean matron introduced to show them the way to the dead-house.

"Please, Mr. Dawe, sir, her ladyship has a bad headache; nothing more, she desires me to say; but she is not equal to much exertion, and if you would please to excuse her dressing-gown and slippers, and to make any business you may have as short as you can, she would feel it a kindness."

"Certainly, Latimer; not five minutes if I can help it," said he.

"This way please, sir."

And she led the way into a darksome, but long and stately room.

The shutters of the window next the door are partly open, but the blind down. Those of the remaining two are closed, and the curtains also. The whole room therefore is lighted by less than half a window; and so imperfectly at the upper end, that on first coming in you could not discern objects there.

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"THE STORAGE OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS, JUN.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 147. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1871.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN
PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I. IN THE BUNGALOW.

TIME out of mind has Springside been the chosen resort of retired Indian officers, and of those civilians who, in the happy days when the pagoda-tree was easier to shake, and more productive in its droppings than at present, were enabled, after a comparatively short number of years spent in the East, to return to England, and settle down in comfort for the remainder of their lives in more than easy circumstances. Men of both classes, with their families, were to be found as settlers at Swetteringham, at Teemington, at Narrowgate, and at other spa-possessing places of the same class, which London physicians of repute had an interest in recommending to their patients. But neither as regards the number nor the social status of their visitors, or their residents, could any of them be compared to Springside. The waters, after all had been said, were not the real attraction of the place. They had their merits, no doubt; they were to the full as nasty as those of any other spa, and, as another advantage, the springs were more numerous, thus affording different degrees of nastiness. Their medicinal virtues were no greater and no less than those of their rivals. Taken internally, or externally in baths, which had the advantage of being larger and handsomer than those of any other place, they effected a certain number of real cures, and imbued hundreds of estimable persons with the belief, that by drinking or bathing in them a vast amount of good had been

achieved, a result which the most skillful physician would not hope to improve upon.

No, the real attraction of Springside was the society, and the inhabitants knew this, and were proud of it. What is Swetteringham? they would say; all very well in its way; very decent place for the country families and clodpole aristocracy of Costershire to visit, and certainly possessing one or two springs, which may or may not be good, but a mere new-fangled mushroom place just sprung into existence, and compelled to add to its attractions with the College for boys, and a Pittville, with fireworks and out-door amusements! Look at Teemington, only fit to live in during the winter, and then almost insupportable from the crowd of hunting-men who swarm in every hotel and lodging-house, and fill the air with their stable talk; look at Narrowgate, crammed with broad-shouldered men from Huddersfield, and fat women from Halifax—and then look at us! We are just the same as we were a hundred years ago; our city has not altered; it is just the same as it was when Beau Pash was its king, and when Sheridan flirted with Miss Linley in Bilsom-street. We have races at the proper time, but we are not overdone with turfites, and we should like to catch any excursionists or "trippers" from the manufacturing towns in our precincts. Our residents have been amongst us for generations, our visitors are people of position and family, and those retired Indians who have made Springside their home are not like the Indian settlers in the other places we have mentioned, who have made money anyhow, but staff officers in the Company's service, proprietors who have a star or two against their names in the books at Leadenhall-street, men who

had the entrée of Government House, or were well known at the Bynulla Club.

So far as their remarks about their Indian settlers were concerned, the Springside people were decidedly right. All the best men of the day, both in the military and civil service, who had either finally retired or were spending their furlough at home, made Springside their head-quarters, and rarely left it save for a few weeks in the London season, when they established themselves in lodgings in the vicinity of the Oriental or the military clubs. The Springside Club, held in those days in the large rooms over the post-office, had amongst its members a majority of Qui-his, testy old gentlemen, who were horribly irritated by the noise made in stamping the letters underneath, or by the rattling of the mail-carts outside. The bachelors lived in hotels and boarding-houses, the married men, who were in the minority, had houses of their own, or lived in stately old lodgings, which, whatever the Springsideites might say, were now in the days of their decadence, and had quite a flavour of powder and peruke about them, reminding one of their former glories.

Unmarried, indeed, but with a house of his own, which, for want of a better name, he has called the Bungalow, and which stands in the midst of a square trim garden, invariably spoken of by him as the compound, is our old friend Captain Cleethorpe. The stout major of the Cheddar yeomanry lies in Cheeseborough churchyard, and Captain Cleethorpe has succeeded to his rank, but the old familiar title seems to suit him best, and he is, at Springside at all events, generally addressed by it. Five years have passed away since the occurrence of that unhappy quarrel in the billiard-room of the George, but they have effected little alteration in the captain's appearance. His face is impressed with a few more lines, his hair is thinner, and what remains of it is a little grizzled; but his figure is still smart and soldier-like, and on horseback or on foot, he is as active as ever. See him now, on this bright evening in early autumn, standing in his dining-room, the large French windows of which open out upon the close-shaven lawn, carefully uncorking two or three bottles of prime wine, which he has just brought up from the cellar, in honour of the arrival on a visit of his old comrade, Captain Norman. See him now, with his bright eyes, his trim moustache, his long brown thorough-bred hands, well out in his grey suit, neat boots, and unmis-

takable air of ease, and you will acknowledge that there is no better-looking fifty-year-old to be found in the country.

"Well, Cooke," he says, as his tall, strapping, red-haired, soldier-servant appears at the door, "has the captain got everything he wanted up-stairs?"

"Yes, sir," said the man; "the captain wants to know whether it is full dress to-night, sir, or not?"

"Full dress?" echoes Cleethorpe, laughing. "Of course not; tell him there are no ladies coming, and that he and I will be alone at dinner, and that he can put on his shooting-jacket and slippers, or whatever he feels most comfortable in."

"Right, sir," replies Cooke, and away he goes.

"Jack will be glad of that," thinks Captain Cleethorpe to himself when he is alone again; "evening dress must be as bad as a suit of armour to him now. What an enormous size he has grown. But he seems just the same simple-hearted, dear old fellow that he has been ever since I have known him."

Further meditation is put an end to by the entrance of Captain Norman. As his old comrade had remarked, the captain had grown enormously stout. Looking at his double chin and slow ponderous gait, one could hardly recognise in him the handsome light dragoon who made so favourable an impression when told off on escort duty, and whose good looks and splendid horsemanship, when acting as "galloper" to the general commanding on a field-day at Aldershot, won the heart, hand, and fortune of the lady who was now his wife.

Dinner concluded, and the good wine duly honoured and attended to, the gentlemen took their cigars into the garden, where the table, with coffee, &c., had already been prepared for them.

"That's about the pattern to suit you, Jack," said Cleethorpe, pointing to an enormous bamboo seat, half chair, half sofa; "put your manly form into that, and make yourself comfortable."

"Right you are," said Captain Norman, following his friend's advice. "I have seen one of these machines before, on board a P. and O. boat, when I went to see some friends off from Southampton, I think."

"Yes," said Cleethorpe; "I brought it home with me from India."

"You must have pleasant associations with India, I should think, Cleethorpe," said Captain Norman, stretching himself

family. "You call your house the Bungalow, I see."

"Well, yes," said Cleethorpe; "a man who has been much out there never entirely rids himself from its associations, more especially if his lines of life be cast in such a place as this. Here we have a perfect eastern colony, eat Anglo-Indian dishes, talk Anglo-Indian slang, and look out more eagerly for our fortnightly batch of the *Calcutta Englishman* than for our daily *Times*."

"Ah," said Captain Norman, with a yawn, "rather dull, isn't it? Dreary old birds most of them, I should say."

"Well, they would not be lively to you," said Cleethorpe, laughing, "while just in the same way your county magnates, with their airs, and your bucolic friends, with their dissertations on mangolds and swedes, would be insupportable to me. However, we are likely to have a pleasant addition to our set; a charming place in this neighbourhood has just been bought by a man whom you know, I think; or, at all events, of whom you have heard me speak."

"Who is that?"

"Sir Geoffrey Heriot; the father of that young fellow who was in our regiment, and who had a row in the billiard-room, you recollect?"

"I recollect! I should think I did."

"Well: I had a letter from Goole, our colonel, you know, yesterday morning, telling me that Sir Geoffrey, unable to endure his solitary life any longer, had sold his place in the country, and knowing that there were sure to be many of his old comrades, and people with whose lives and tastes he had some affinity, about here, had bought a lovely little box within two miles of this, where old General Chowder died a month ago. Goole asks me to call upon Sir Geoffrey, and do the civil to him, but, beyond that, he intrusts me with a commission; he wants me to get Sir Geoffrey a housekeeper."

"A housekeeper!" echoed Captain Norman, lazily. "Then the old boy has never married again?"

"Not he; from my recollection of what Goole told me of his married life, he has acted on the 'once bit twice shy' principle."

"And do you know any nice motherly old woman whom you could recommend to look after the general's socks, and make his jams, and rob him herself, instead of letting the tradespeople rob him?"

Cleethorpe looked at his friend in admira-

tion. "Certainly marriage has developed you amazingly in every way, Jack!" he said. "It must be your domestic experience that enables you to give so accurate a description of the housekeeper's duties. I certainly do know a lady who is neither old nor motherly, but who is decidedly nice, and whom I thought of recommending to Sir Geoffrey Heriot, though I doubt whether she could fulfil all the functions which you have enumerated."

"And who is she—a protégée of yours?"

"No, indeed, I know comparatively little of her."

"Maid, wife, or widow?"

"A widow of the name of Pickering; her husband had held a very inferior position in some government office I believe, and when she came here after his death, some three years ago, she had an idea of seeking employment as a nursery governess, or companion to a lady, or something of that kind. But the reaction consequent upon the fatigues of nursing him in his last illness, so I understood, was too much for her; she fell ill herself, and would have died had it not been for the devoted manner in which she was nursed by a young sister, who accompanied her, and the kindness which she received from our parson and his wife."

"And his wife!" echoed Captain Norman. "Mrs. Pickering, then, is rather plain, I take it."

"Another observation springing from your domestic experience," said Cleethorpe; "but this time you are wrong. Mrs. Pickering is a remarkably handsome woman."

"And the parson and his wife attended to her in her illness?"

"Not merely that. During this illness they discovered that she was miserably poor; that her husband had left her no pension, no life insurance, absolutely nothing at all; that both she and her sister were quick and intelligent, and willing to do anything, no matter how laborious or how poorly paid, to earn their livelihood."

"Poor creatures, how very creditable," said Captain Norman, placidly sipping his glass of curaçoa.

"Well, our parson—Drage his name is, Onesiphorus Drage, queer name isn't it?—is the son of a man who is a great gun in the City, director of banks, and all sorts of things, and, amongst others, of one of the telegraph companies. Drage wrote up to his father, and the old man offered to have them put into the telegraph office

in London, but somehow or other Mrs. Pickering had a great objection to that, and so it ended in both of them being made clerks in the branch office down here. They got on wonderfully, especially the younger one, who displayed such singular ability that, when an important vacancy occurred in the head office in London, they offered her the berth, and as the salary and chances were really good, and they found a respectable person for her to live with, Mrs. Pickering made no further objection, and about a year ago the girl went to town, and there she remains.

"And what became of Mrs. Pickering?"

"Well, just before that, Mrs. Drage was taken ill and died, and on her death-bed she spoke to Mrs. Pickering, who had attended her throughout, and implored her to be a mother to the little girl whom she was leaving."

"Ah, ha!" said Captain Norman, "which means also to be a wife to the reverend old—what you call him."

"Not at all. The Reverend Onesiphorus, who is delicate on his chest, has been away for the last twelve months, yachting with his father in the Mediterranean, and left his flock in charge of his curate, while Mrs. Pickering, relieved of her telegraphic duties, has been living at the rectory, and educating and taking care of little Bertha."

"And when does the parson come back?" asked Captain Norman.

"Mrs. Pickering expected him the night before last, and cleared out into her old lodging to give him possession."

"And you propose to make Mrs. Pickering old Heriot's housekeeper?" asked Norman.

"Exactly."

"Then you are doing a decidedly unhandsome thing, Cleethorpe, and outraging the laws of nature and three volume novels."

"What do you mean?"

"Why of course this parson ought to come back full of gratitude and all that sort of thing, and ought to marry the telegraph woman, and live happy ever after."

"Yes," said Cleethorpe, "perhaps so; but then you see, Jack, you don't know Mrs. Pickering."

"No, and I don't know the parson, for the matter of that."

"You will have that felicity presently, for I asked him to come up here this evening to hear about my proposition. No, Drage is not a young man, nor scarcely what you could call a lady-killer, but he is young

enough to set the world talking if such a woman as Mrs. Pickering were to become his housekeeper, whereas with such a tough old bamboo-cane as Sir Geoffrey Heriot, the veriest Mrs. Grundy in Springside, and there are some good specimens of the breed amongst them I can tell you, could find no opportunity for scandal."

"Hem," said Captain Norman; "my experience of women is, that when they give their minds to it, there is nobody and nothing that they could not contrive to say something disagreeable about. By the way, what became of Sir Geoffrey's son, after the row with that great hulking brute, whose name I forget?"

"No one ever heard anything about him," said Cleethorpe. "I have asked Goole more than once, but could get no tidings of the lad. He told me that he received a polite but formal acknowledgment of a letter, which he thought it his duty to write to Sir Geoffrey after the row, and that when once, on the first occasion of their meeting afterwards, he was beginning to allude to the circumstances, the old man stopped him by saying, 'I have no son now, sir; you will oblige me by never mentioning his name again.' Goole and Sir Geoffrey have met several times since then, and are, I believe, rather intimate, as indeed this letter proves, but the subject has never been touched upon by either of them."

"It was a queer business, that funking of his, and one which I could never understand, for, from the little I saw of him, the lad seemed to have plenty of pluck."

"He was a nice boy," said Cleethorpe. "I think of him very often, always when his father is named; this letter brought all the circumstances fresh into my mind, and only yesterday morning I was wondering what had become of him."

"Taken the queen's shilling, perhaps," said Norman, "or gone out to Australia."

"No," said Cleethorpe, reflectively; "he struck me as more likely to fall on his feet in a better way than that. He was the sort of lad that people would take a fancy to, scarcely knowing why they did so."

"By Jove!" interrupted Captain Norman, striking his fist upon the table with such violence as to make the cups and glasses ring, "I have got it at last."

"So had I, very nearly," said Captain Cleethorpe, moving out of the way of some dripping coffee, "and hot too; but what is it that you have got, Jack?"

"An idea," said Captain Norman.

"Keep it, book it, and register it at

once as 'Norman's patent,' or no one will ever believe you came by it honestly," said Cleethorpe.

"Don't you be funny, but listen," said his friend. "Do you know what it is to be haunted by a face?"

"I did," said Cleethorpe, half sadly. "I have been haunted by a good many in my time."

"Ay, those were women's," said Norman; "but I don't mean that, nor in that way. Do you know what it is to see a face which you recognise at once as being familiar to you, but to which you cannot put a name; which you have seen somewhere, but you cannot tell whether in real life or in a dream; which perpetually rises before you, always in the same unsatisfactory manner; the identity of which it is impossible to discover, while the more you try to link it with a personality the more vague do your thoughts grow, and the more dispirited are you as to your chances of success?"

"Yes," said Cleethorpe. "You have a fine poetical flow, Jack, but I know what you mean."

"Well, I have suffered from this sort of haunting for months past," said Norman. "We were in town in the spring, the first time we had been there for some years, and, amongst other places, we went to the house of a Mrs. Entwistle, a kind of connexion of my wife's, who is a swell in her way, and had never taken any notice of us before. She is an eccentric old woman, but very well off, they say, and goes into very good society. At her house I noticed a young man, whose face and manner seemed somehow familiar to me, though I felt that both had altered since the last time I saw him. He was talking to the guests, giving orders to the servants, and altogether making himself so much at home that I had the curiosity to inquire who he was. I learned that he was a Mr. Hardinge, a young man whom the old lady for a year or two past had adopted as her son, but whether he was related to her by blood, or whether her adoption of him was only one of her many eccentricities, I could not gather. Having gleaned thus much from an old fellow who used to dine at the next table to me at the 'Rag,' and who seemed to know everything about everybody in town, I went from the staircase, where I had carried on the pumping process, back into the rooms, and found my young friend in full swing as before. This time he caught me looking at him, started, turned rapidly

on his heel, and for the rest of the evening carefully avoided coming near me. I met him several times afterwards in the park, at the theatre, in society, but invariably with the same result. He shunned me, sir, regularly shunned me; made a point of turning away whenever I approached him. During the whole of that time, and very frequently since, I have endeavoured to recall to my mind where I had seen that young man before, and who he was. As you spoke it suddenly flashed upon me, and I have not the smallest doubt about it. The place where I last saw him was the inn at Cheeseborough, and his real name is George Heriot."

"Singular," said Captain Cleethorpe, when his companion had finished speaking, "very singular indeed. You are not generally very clear in these matters, Jack, but your reasoning convinces me that in the present instance you must be right. Do you imagine the boy recognised you?"

"Now I think it over I have not a doubt of it, though I cannot understand how I failed to recognise him. He has just that same cheeky, kind of way that he had when he told me that it would be good for my health if he were my player at pool, and that he would give me plenty of exercise in walking after my ball."

"Do you imagine that his father knows of his position?"

"I have no means of judging, but I should say decidedly not."

"Did you ever try to get anything out of the old lady, Mrs. Entwistle?"

"What do you mean—money?"

"No, no," said Cleethorpe, laughing; "any information about the lad?"

"No, I didn't myself, but now I recollect perfectly that Lou—that's my wife—told me that on one occasion when she was having luncheon with the old lady alone, she happened to mention Sir Geoffry Heriot's name, that Mrs. Entwistle turned as white as a sheet, and asked her, in a very agitated manner, if she knew the general. When she found Lou did not she became all right again; but my Lou, who is a remarkably sharp woman, at least so I think, thought it was funny altogether, and told me of it when she came home."

"Mrs. Norman is a woman of great acuteness I am sure," said Cleethorpe, "and it is a curious business altogether. However, since the old general is left solitary, and likely to remain so, the greater reason that he should be provided with a comely housekeeper, who will do

her duty by him without ultimate designs on his person or his purse. Mrs. Pickering is exactly the lady for the situation, and no possible objection can be made by anybody to her undertaking it unless by—

"The Reverend Mr. Drage, sir," said Cooke, appearing at his master's elbow.

PARIS VIGNETTES.*

I. ON THE ROAD.

COMING up that most sylvan of lines, the Rouen and Paris Railway, I might congratulate myself on there being only three other passengers—each, of course, with the Frenchman's favourite canvas-covered valise—to crowd up the carriage. But after many allusions to a friend of theirs called *Æneas*, I am startled to find a great red dog, answering to that name, emerging from under the seat, where he has been secreted to avoid the little travelling dog-jails, where he can hear some of his kind yelping. The two stout Frenchmen become like children, all the way putting their hats on him, and embracing him. *Æneas*, behaving with far more dignity, raises himself up to look out at passing objects, showing great amazement at the flocks of birds floating over the fields below, following them with his eyes, and "setting" them as well as he can in that position. On an alarm of the ticket-taker coming round, the agitated friends try to force *Æneas* in again, kicking, pushing, striving to bend that back, which stubbornly but gently refuses. The alarm proves a false one, and at his own selected moment *Æneas* retires into concealment to sleep, and is not suffered to emerge again.

The other passenger is a stern-faced officer of the Ducrot pattern, who keeps his arms folded, in stern protest at what he sees as we draw near to Paris. These rent roofs, ruined houses—above all, the temporary bridge over which we creep cautiously, with a swarm of men busy repairing—are indeed sore reminders. The arches of the former bridge beside us seem like three old wire meat-covers, or dilapidated bird-cages, so torn and twisted is their iron-work. More significant still are the houses, now nearly restored, but all, I note, preserving the old bruises and holes of the shells. There is a suspicious amount of staring red-tiled roof, while those long vast sheds of iron and glass which are found as

we approach great railway stations, are all pierced, and singed, and shredded into jagged holes; and almost every single pane is shattered as though by an exterminating hailstorm. Considering the vast amount of trains and passengers that pour into Paris every hour, here must be an aggregate of mortification for every Frenchman really serious, and which can be read in the faces of my three companions. The officer mutters and folds his arms tighter, the friends become grave. The railway porters and officials are all in new clothing, while the proprietor of the well-known *Hôtel des Réservoirs* at Versailles feels so prosperous, after his late distinguished guests' patronage, that he can advertise his house all over the show-boards, adding a tempting-looking picture. Coming into the great city, we miss the huge gathering of cabs and omnibuses which used to wait the arrival of voyagers. Horses are scarce, and the white and winnying Normandies of the omnibuses have not yet arrived in sufficient quantities.

II. TOKENS OF THE SPOILER.

EXACTLY a year ago, when I drove into this great city, a vast creaking waggon, drawn by a number of omnibus horses, and carrying an enormous-sized cannon, on its way to the ramparts, was the first object that met us. Every one had a sort of fevered look; amateur soldiers in new and fantastic dresses, borrowed from the stage, filled the streets. Now there is hardly a soldier to be seen. Everything has a faded air, and the garnishing of the streets, those smart, dandy lamp-posts and kiosks, have a shabby, unkempt air, like old-fashioned furniture dragged out of a store-room. As we turn into the Boulevards, once so glittering, and like a raree-show for crowds of figures and carriages, the change is more astonishing: it seems a desert. A stray omnibus rolls jangling by, then a long interval and a cab passes. Long slips of asphalt are seen almost bare. It is impossible not to admire the energy and spirit which have made the old shops put on their usual air, their windows seeming to be filled as of yore; but, alas! they are old wares and properties.

The constant change of names of streets, theatres, &c., according as the government changes, is very inconvenient. It looks pitiful to see the *Avenue de l'Impératrice* with a piece of paper pasted over it, on which is printed *Avenue Uhrich*, and the clumsily substituted "nationale" for "imperiale." It might be thought that some compromise

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. iv., p. 379.

could be come to on this point, and that the next monarchical government might choose some neutral description. The climax of absurdity was reached at the fine theatre of the Châtelet, where the imperial arms over the proscenium are partly covered with a sort of napkin, like a bishop's apron, which as the air floats it about is lifted, revealing the obnoxious eagle and the crossed sceptres beneath.

After awhile the eye grows quite familiar with the signs of hostile destruction. All down the once gay Boulevard des Italiens, the great plate-glass windows are all starred and shattered into holes from bullets—holes which are clumsily patched up with paper or wax. The owners have not yet found opportunity to restore them. But the streets are in good order, and there is not a sign of a barricade visible. Most curious of all is it to look on the remains of the Vendôme Column. The bright "street of peace" has, indeed, lost its whole glory, and looks utterly mediocre for the lack of this handsome ornament. The Hôtel de Ville, even the Tuileries, and certainly those tame building, the Finances, Palace of the Legion of Honour, &c., could be well spared without leaving many blanks, but the column should be put up to make Paris what it used to be. The town-hall was never a thing of beauty, or a building that excited much human sympathy; not much could be said for the vaunted Ministère des Finances, which now lies a sort of amphitheatre of rubbish. The true attraction will always be Paris as a whole—its air and bearing of beauty; but a building or so will not be missed. In the Tuileries Gardens and Elysian Fields some of the statues have suffered cruelly; Hercules has lost his leg, Venus her arm. But through the stubbly trees and mangy shrubbery—and it is amazing how little these have suffered on the whole—can be seen the "merry-go-rounds," and the open-air cafés, getting ready for the night's show; and in the broad daylight it is amusing to see a rehearsal going on—some music-hall lady practising her vivacious song to a full orchestra.

Paris jogs out merrily, as of yore, in the direction of the Bois, only there is far more to see now. The little open spaces are, of course, in demand—the solitary youth in the strapped-down white trousers, loving to show himself, enjoying the luxury of a vehicle. As we get close to the great archway, it is a curious feeling to see and touch the evidence of "shell-work." The

arch itself is more bruised and maimed than has been described—a boy's leg (in stone) having been knocked off, corners of pediments showing clean fissure-like "bites," and the surfaces being scarred and indented all over. The mark of a shell is significant and unmistakable—a sort of scorched black star with a dint or bruise. But on the houses, asphalt pavement, and iron, the effect was terrible. Now hundreds of men are at work mending and renewing; but even the handsome houses that have gone through this process have a curious motley air, like a patched old coat, being covered with what seem like stains, and which are the newly inserted pieces. Their railings were all twisted and crumpled up like wire, and never could be straightened again; elaborate balconies were squeezed, as the saying goes, "into cocked hats." The pavement, as far as the eye could see, was all in great rents and holes, where the ill-omened messengers had alighted. Yet everybody was in spirits, the workmen on their scaffolds and the proprietors who employed them. There are signs of money everywhere, with indications of the luxurious taste peeping out cautiously. It can be seen with how little trouble damage of this sort can be set right, at least, externally; and it seems certain that, before another year is out, Paris will look very nearly the same as before.

One change will not be relished, namely, the new police—a set of buccaneer-looking, rowdyish fellows, with open collars and handkerchiefs, loose blue great-coats, coarse leather belts, and heavy steel-scabbarded cutlasses. They are not civil, as were the former *petits maîtres* in the cocked-hats and tight waists. The soldiers, too, seem fallen off; most of them appearing in undress, scarce half made, and that so unfashionably that the dogs might fairly bark at them. That old impostor, the theatrical zonave, about whom we were all crazy once, has, I am glad to see, almost disappeared. I note a few, but very shabby and hang-dog in appearance, who walk along modestly, and without the old swagger.

English and American excursionists abound. At the hotel where I have put up I find them in that patronising humour of half-enjoyment, half-surprise, which is almost indescribable. I hear each recounting his exploits, and inexpressibly compassionate on the barbarous habits of the natives. The raw tourist is invariably affected by the spectacle of salt helped by

a knife. "Lord, ain't it droll!" Yet the companion of the lady who made the remark was eating with his knife! More amusing still was it to hear those with the advantage of a few hours' more familiarity with the place, instructing the tyros. "Oh, you should see the Pally-royle, the place where all the shops are—then there's the Bullyvars." But an American gentleman surpassed our British product, the present writer having heard him state (and being further prepared to make affidavit as to the literal accuracy of this report), that he was staying "at th' Hôtel de Londrays," with persons of no less distinction than "the Duke Dolmail (sic), and the Princes of Johnville and Condy."

The theatres are nearly all in full work again. Precisely as on the eve of the siege, the odious Theresa resumes the part she had to abandon through that awkward interruption, and displays her revolting attractions at the Gaieté in the White Cat. A better sign of the times was to find the Comédie Française crammed to overflowing, the musicians banished from the orchestra to make room, and the admirable Got and magnificent Favart holding all spell-bound. At another theatre was revived the Three Musketeers of the elder Dumas, with Melingue, who "created the original rôle" of D'Artagnan. According to innumerable puffs in the various papers, this actor was described as being an extraordinary attraction, but he seemed to me to have very average gifts. Indeed, the popularity of pieces of this kind with the French seems a mystery; they are absolutely dull, and beside some of our own "sensational" pieces, are positively tedious. Thus, there was a minute representation of all that led to the execution of that injured monarch Charles the First, his taking leave of his wife and children, the procession, &c., gracefully and even tenderly given, but dull and out of place. Everybody was noble, gallant, heroic, suffering, uttering such grand and beautiful sentiments, walking in so stately a fashion, their robes floating behind them, that though it failed to interest it could not but be an improving spectacle. An English historical character known as Crumvale, and who is much softer in his disposition than the hero presented by Mr. Carlyle, delivered himself of the following passage, which seemed singularly apropos to events then passing: "All are instruments, machines which I could put in motion. But then the parliament—yes, I know well, from thence is likely to

come the opposition. . . . Is it of the kingdom or of the king they are weary? It is of the latter—merely a name. I must find some name which has not been used as yet. I must find some office which can let him who obtains it gain all honours. One must have the look of protecting the country, although she has no need of protection. Yes, the very thing. Starting from below, passing by the peasantry, the Commune, the army," &c. It will hardly be believed that on the evening of the day when the nature of M. Thiers's future office was on every lip, this soliloquy passed without a sign of intelligence on the part of the audience!

III. COMMUNISTS ON TRIAL.

GOING down by that familiar road to Versailles, it is easy to see how it has been transformed into a little capital, so crowded are the trains. The old-fashioned place is now all in flurry; the long trains arrive full, and go away as full, with women in white frilled caps and large baskets, which the citizen sisters and brothers are in a perpetual struggle to force into trains, or under the seat, or, better still, on the whole length of the seat. The secret of this idiosyncrasy, as well as of the corresponding one of the stout gentlemen in white trousers and glossy silk summer coats, set off with a crimson rosette, and who will force in their canvas valises and queer composite carpet-bags, is of course to be found in the wretched love of scraping, of going through any discomfort sooner than pay for baggage or for lumps of sugar. I notice many other stout gentlemen, all of precisely the same pattern, who are singularly important, resemble the late M. Cavour, and perspire freely. They have rosettes, and handsome gold chains and rings, and talk to each other on the floor of the waiting-room, while we sit down. These I know to be deputies, who, in France, are mostly of M. Cavour's pattern. We have many officers, too, whose lace is of the newest and shiniest, and who on their own hill, as we may call this place, whence they had beaten the wretched Communist cocks, fancy they can crow a little. There is a great stream towards one wing of the palace, where the old theatre, now looking very shabby, is, as all the world knows, turned into a parliament. Servants in the state livery, scarlet and gold collars, and green coats, hang about the doors, with plenty of soldiers. Here there is a lobby, where crowds beg for tickets, and the stout deputy emerging, is surrounded by a troop, to whom he is most gracious, and takes

along with him in a queue "to see what can be done." I suspect that this is a flattering moment, and that the legislator is rather pleased on the whole.

Turning away from the great gilt railing and gates, through which I see the tempting park, I find a more exciting scene before me. Facing the palace are the stables, built, architecturally, into two vast hemicycles, and at the centre one, which is a riding-school, more soldiers are clustered. Every one is entering here, and I know that the trial of the Communists is going on. Entering at once, we are in the riding-school, which has the sawdust half a foot thick on the ground, and are astonished at the scene, which is like an effective tableau on the stage, as it was no doubt intended to be. Far away—very far away—is a sort of raised dais, with a long table stretching across, exactly the description of thing we see as the curtain rises, and discover the magnificos, or inquisitors, who distribute stage justice. There are two flights of steps, with a space between, with semicircular tables at each side. The court is composed of about a dozen officers, some of a "lopsided" character, with only one epaulette—all of a theatrical, showy bearing, twisting their moustaches. Behind them is an artistically draped festooning of green, and in the hasty decoration of this riding-school we can see the "tasty" style of decoration of the French. Our own upholsterers would have "tacked up" some calico all round, but all this is done with the most elegant drapery and graceful hangings. At the top, over the head of the president, is a great framed oil-painting of the Crucifixion. At each side, on the first platform, are two great orchestras. Below the second flight, and on the second floor of the riding-school, are reserved seats, and beyond these, again, standing room for the crowd. The orchestra to the right is crowded with the accused, each sitting between two soldiers and an alarming quantity of bayonets. At the circular tables in front sit the secretaries in full uniform. In front of these the huissiers of the court, who are in uniform, and who are in perpetual motion. The whole procedure, indeed, seems to be modelled on strict stage precedent, and is really most effective, the uniformed officials bowing gracefully, descending and ascending the steps solemnly to hand papers and give messages. Sixty reporters sit facing the Communists, and work their pens briskly.

Exactly in the centre was a little rail like

a prie-dieu, the "witness box"—a situation of most alarming publicity, but which, it must be said, in all justice, seemed to have little effect upon the occupants, who rather enjoyed their conspicuous position. The huge and appreciative bulk of the audience who could scarcely hear a word—they were placed so far away—was composed of soldiers, with loungers and innumerable strangers. The president of the court is "the Colonel Merlin," as he is called—a grey, dignified, yet bullet-headed officer of the Pelissier type; and it was impossible not to be struck with his extraordinary clearness of voice, his measured nicety of speech, which made nearly every word audible, travelling over the heads of the crowded ranks to that enormous distance. There was courtesy and even grace in all that he said. His comrades, who were singularly young, were mere lay figures. The faces of the Communist chiefs were characteristic enough. They fairly represented all the physical French types. We all know the trim, dark-bearded, bright-eyed, small-featured, intelligent face—that is Assi, the Creuzot workman, in his National Guard dress. There are several variations of this type. Lullier shows the rugged head, with a moustache only, and an intelligent eye. Pascal Grousset is the rather handsome French face, well moulded, such as the jeune premier shows on the stage. Courbet, the painter, a huge, burly man, has one of those German-bearded physiognomies. Some have a grotesque, semi-humorous expression, which reminds us of Grassot at the Palais Royal—such as Tony Moilin and Verdure. Ferré, the one to whom the evidence pointed as responsible for the murder of the hostages, has by no means a truculent face.

Some of the inferior Communists seemed poor, "dirty" fellows, and it was amusing to see how proud they were of their companionship with the more distinguished, of the soldiers' bayonets about them, and how they folded their arms with the dignity of a transpontine theatre. Every moment, as the trial proceeded and as the witnesses gave evidence, one or other was jumping up for short speeches.

It is the fashion to find fault with the French system of conducting a trial, and yet, it must be said, that where there are a vast number of accused, and a cloud of witnesses, the French system is more clear and lively, and more likely to leave an impression on the jury. We know the sense of wearisomeness, and even of unintelligibility, as counsel examines witness

after witness, with the tedious waiting while they think, and then answer, slowly and cautiously, and the further delay while the judge writes down. Here a witness was brought in, tripped up the steps, took his place at the rail, and at once started on a short but graphic, and sometimes vivid, narrative of what he had seen or what he had to tell. It was over in a minute or two. The judge then asked him more particularly as to what such and such a prisoner had done. The latter would then put his few questions, and the thing was over. Thus an abstract of a sentence or two would describe the value of each witness's testimony. Not so easy to perceive is the value of the personal interruption by the president of each accused. "You were on such a day at the town-hall; you were seen with a body of men," &c. For the prisoner's denial in the face of proof would not count for anything; neither would an ingenious explanation in his own favour, nor still less his admission of the facts. How much better and more accurate is the description, "the accused," than one of the "prisoner," which merely describes a person as being under arrest. Rather childish, however, were the verbal corrections and melodramatic expostulations of the president; as, when he pronounced glowing eulogies on the army, or when he interrupted the prisoner who was talking of the "deserted population of Paris." "Deserted! but by those whom it chassed with volleys of musketry." But the main impression left was certainly of the remarkable fluency and readiness of speech in all concerned, and the epigrammatic choice of phrase. It seemed, too, that the Communists were rarely at a loss for an excuse, even in the face of a most damaging piece of evidence. The president's remarks were sometimes even "gay"—as, when one of the accused dwelt upon some "plans" which he had submitted, and which had been only "flung in the dirt," "whether so many other plans," added the president, "have found their way."

A LUCKY PRESENTIMENT.

ABOUT sixty years ago a remarkable case was tried, at the criminal side, in the county of Cork.

The writer wishes to pledge himself at the outset to the literal authenticity of the narrative, which he heard from the lips of the late eminent queen's counsel, George Bennett, at that time a junior on the

Munster circuit, and himself an eye-witness and attentive listener at the trial.

On a fine summer evening, when the rustic hour of supper was approaching, there arrived at the door of a comfortable thatched cabin, of large dimensions, such as the class of persons known in Ireland as "strong farmers" usually inhabit, a stranger, dressed in the then peasant costume, corduroy shorts, frieze coat, caubeen, and brogues, and with a blackthorn stick in his hand. The wayfarer entered, with the usual salutation, "God save all here," and asked if this was not Denis Macarthy's house. The women who were in the cabin told him it was, and invited him civilly to sit down, "and take an air of the fire;" and with this invitation he complied, entertaining his new acquaintances the while with such news as he had collected while on his journey.

The man was dark-featured, of middle stature, and of square and powerful build.

In a little while Denis Macarthy, returning from his fields, entered the cabin-door, and the stranger introduced himself as his cousin, Phil Ryan, from Cappaghmore, in the county of Limerick, and told him what had brought him to that distant part of the world. His business was to say certain prayers, according to Irish usage, over the grave of a common kinsman of both, who had died two or three weeks before, and was buried in the neighbouring graveyard.

Macarthy received his cousin, although he had never seen his face before, with the customary cordiality of clanship, and told him that he must sup and sleep in his house that night, and eat his breakfast there before setting out in the morning on his homeward journey.

To all this the stranger consented, and then, as he was unacquainted with the situation of the graveyard, he asked Macarthy, if it was not far off, to show him the way to it, and point out the grave of their cousin.

Macarthy readily consented, and, as the potatoes were not quite boiled, it was agreed that they should set out at once, and return in time for supper.

In the south of Ireland simple burial-places, probably of immense antiquity, containing no vestige of a sacred building, rudely fenced with a loose stone wall, lichen-stained, and often partly overgrown with ivy, with perhaps two or three hawthorns, and an ancient ash-tree growing within them, are frequently to be met with. Possibly these small and solitary enclosures

were dedicated to the same funeral uses long before the dawn of Christianity broke upon the island.

A wild and narrow track, perhaps as ancient as the place of sepulture itself, crossing, at a short distance from Macarthy's cabin, the comparatively modern main road, leads over a little rising ground to the burial-place, which lies in the lap of a lonely hollow, seldom disturbed by the sound of human tread or voice, or the rattle of car-wheel.

Macarthy and the stranger walked up the ancient and silent by-road, until they reached the hollow I have mentioned. There, under the shadow of an old twisted thorn-tree, a stile crosses the loose wall of the burial-ground. At this stile they came to a pause.

"Go on," said Macarthy.

"Go you first," replied the stranger.

"Go first yourself," said the farmer, a little peremptorily, making a stand, he did not know why, upon the point of precedence.

"Arra, man; go on, can't ye, and don't be botherin'; what are ye afraid of?" insisted Ryan.

"Now I tell you what it is; I don't understand you, nor what you're at; but devil a foot I'll go over that wall till you go over it first," said Macarthy, doggedly.

The man laughed, and looked angry.

"To be sure I'll go over it first, if that'll please ye; and what does it matter who's first or who's last?" he answered, surlily. "But you're the biggest omadhoun I ever set eyes on."

And, speaking to this effect, he crossed the stile, followed by Macarthy, who pointed out the grave, and forthwith the stranger knoeled beside it, according to Irish custom, and began to tell his beads and say his prayers, an observance which usually lasts about a quarter of an hour.

When the prayers were ended, the farmer and Ryan, now quite good friends again, returned to the farm-house, where the stranger had his supper with the family, and in the morning, having eaten his breakfast, he took his leave, and set out on his homeward journey.

Irish ideas of hospitality in the peasant rank make it a matter of obligation upon the host to accompany his guest for a part of his way. Macarthy, in compliance with this courteous custom, set out with the stranger, and about a mile away from his house they entered a little village, where he shook hands with his guest, and bid him farewell.

But his visitor would not part without

testifying his gratitude, according to the custom of the country, by treating his kinsman to some drink, which he insisted on doing in the village public-house, the door of which stood open close by them.

Macarthy accordingly went in with him. They sat down at a table, and the stranger, having ascertained what his cousin liked best, ordered a pot of porter, making some excuse for not partaking himself.

When Macarthy raised the pewter pot to his lips, a sudden pain, which he afterwards described more particularly, in the back of his neck compelled him to set it down untasted.

The stranger urged him to drink it, and, without explaining the cause of his hesitation, he a second time raised the vessel to his mouth. Precisely the same thing occurred again.

Once more the stranger expostulated, and pressed him more vehemently to drink; and again he tried it, but with exactly the same result.

"What ails ye? and why don't you drink your liquor? Don't you like it?" the stranger demanded.

"I don't like it," answered Macarthy, getting up, "and I don't like you, nor your ways, and, in God's name, I'll have nothing more, good or bad, to say to you."

"To the devil I pitch you and it," said the stranger breaking into undisguised fury, and at the same time, through the open door, he flung the contents of the pewter pot upon the road.

Without another word, in this temper, the unknown cousin strode out of the door, and walked on his way, leaving the farmer in a state of perturbation and suspicion.

Happening to look into the pewter pot, which had contained the porter just thrown out, he saw a white sediment at the bottom of it. He and the publican put their heads together over it, but could make nothing of this deposit.

It so happened, however, that the physician was in attendance at the dispensary, only a few yards away, and to him they submitted the white powder that lay in the bottom of the measure. It proved to be arsenic.

The mud upon the road where the porter had fallen was also examined, and some of the same deposit was found upon it.

Upon these facts, and the short information sworn by Macarthy, a neighbouring magistrate at once issued his warrant, with which the police pursued the miscreant, who, without apprehension of his purpose having been discovered, was pursuing his

journey quite at his ease. He was arrested, and duly committed to prison.

The animus and purpose of the heinous enterprise came afterwards to light. The pretended cousin, whose real name was Mara, had been bribed to put Macarthy to death, by a person interested in the termination of a lease in which Macarthy was the last life.

The attempt to poison was only a resource in reserve. The primary plan, and that relied upon with good reason, was of a totally different kind. Under the pretext I have mentioned, Macarthy was to have been induced to accompany Mara to the lonely graveyard, the position of which, and the stile by which it was entered, were familiar to him. He was to have allowed Macarthy to cross the stile first, and, following him closely, as he descended it at the other side, he was, from above, to have dealt him, with his heavy loaded stick, such a blow upon the head as must have felled him to the ground, and, as he lay stunned in the graveyard, he would have easily despatched him. The sounds of violence in that sequestered place no ear could have heard, and no human aid would have interfered to prevent the consummation of his atrocious purpose.

The women, who, in the large barn-like room were attending to the preparations for supper at its further end, had caught nothing of the conversation of the two men who stood near the door. The effect of this might not very improbably have been that no one would have known in what direction their walk had lain, or could have conjectured where the body of Macarthy, if he had been murdered, was concealed. It might have lain under the wall of that rude cemetery undiscovered until the next funeral brought people into its solitary enclosure.

At this point all turned upon the presentiment which had so mysteriously determined Macarthy, without any motive of which he was conscious, against going over the stile before him. Macarthy was too powerful a man to have been assailed on fair terms, with a reasonable chance of the intending assassin's success.

When the trial was over, Mr. Bennett, my informant, who, though not in the case, and a very junior barrister at the time, had listened to the trial with deep interest, found an opportunity of speaking to the prosecutor, and asked him some questions upon the most extraordinary point in the strange occurrence deposed to.

What passed was to the following effect:

"You stated that you were prevented from drinking the porter by a pain in the back of your neck. Did that pain affect all the back of your neck; and if not, to what part of your neck was it confined?"

"It was in one spot only, close under the skull on the backbone."

"Was it a severe pain?"

"The worst I ever felt."

"Had you ever had the same pain before?"

"Never any pain like it before or since."

"Can you give me any idea of what the pain was like?"

"It covered about the size of the top of a man's finger pressed hard against the neck, and it felt like a red-hot bullet."

"Did the pain last long?"

"It came whenever I raised the porter towards my mouth, and stopped so soon as I set the vessel down again; and I could not drink or hold the vessel up while it lasted."

Some persons will account, upon natural, though complicated theories, for the mental and physical impressions which, they may suppose, resulted in this sensation, and in the consequent escape of the prosecutor, Macarthy, from a deep-laid scheme of murder. Others will see nearly insuperable difficulties in the way of such an explanation. It is, in any case, one of the most remarkable instances of justice satisfied and life saved by mysterious premonition that I have ever met with.

The hired assassin was convicted, and, although his intention had been defeated, his crime was then, I believe, a capital one. The wretch who employed him was, also, if I remember rightly, convicted and punished.

I relate this story with a very exact recollection of the terms in which it was told to me, and with a conscientious anxiety to reproduce the narrative accurately. It is extraordinary enough, I think, to merit being rescued from oblivion.

THE COVENANTER.

THE Lord beheld a cotter by the shore,
Leaning his cheek upon a hard brown hand
And gazing seaward; and the winds and waves
Were loud within this cotter's soul, the strife
Of wind and wave and cloud were pictured there
As in a trembling water; and the Lord
Breath'd on the forehead of the man, and said
"My storm shall have a tongue!"

But many a year

The cotter, Walter Logan, work'd and work'd
Within his shieling on the Argyllshire coast,
Wherein he dwelt unwedded and alone
A silence-lover, moody and unlearned.

One book he had, a Bible great and old,
Whose large plain characters his untutor'd eye
Follow'd with pain, till as a mother's face
All were familiar. Most he loved to sit,
His cheek upon his hand, upon a cliff
That overlook'd the sea; when the storm
Hung dark around him, and above, the Lord
Opened a rent among his drifting cloud
And looked upon him, and the man sat there
Unconscious of the Lord.

But night and day
Came tempest seaward: sea and sky were join'd
Together, to the roaring of the winds;
The blackness gathered like a frowning face,
Till floating downward—like a living thing
A sunbeam would alight on Ailsa Craig,
And smile upon the waves until they sunk
With deep low murmurs brightening as they fill,
Like to the lions licking Daniel's feet,
His brightness growing human in their eyes.
There Logan sat, content to hear and see
In silence, for his lonely soul was stirred
To watch with face unmoved a mighty power
Whose very moaning calm was like a threat,
Wherefore his soul grew fashioned to the place,
And in his brain the elements kept time
Unto the solemn music of the book
Until the tempest of the waves became
The spirit of the Lord.

Thou knowest now
How in the after days this man became
The trumpet of the tempest, with one blast
Blowing together all the scatter'd souls,
To whom the Lord was a tempestuous sign
And portent! In that dreadful wind so raised
He perish'd. Here beside the lonely sea
His very grave is wild and like a wave!

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

ESSEX-STREET, STRAND.

THE town house of the proud Bishops of Exeter once stood at the bottom of that sloping street that lies westward of Temple Bar, in a sort of small bay or backwater southward of the Strand. Through a sort of picture-frame gate, from whence steps lead down to the shore of the river, you catch a pleasant green glimpse of the young plane-trees that line the new Embankment. On the left a passage leads into the Temple, reminding us that Exeter House once formed the outer part of the domain of those semi-ecclesiastical knights whom the lawyers first robbed, then burnt; and on the right stands a Unitarian chapel of considerable antiquity. Many an unfedged barrister, innocent as yet of law, has passed up this street towards Westminster. Many a Templar Ranger or Lovelace has reeled down it, zigzagging his way to his airy den in King's Bench-walk or Pump-court, heedless of Coke and contemptuous of Littleton. Many a knotty legal argument have those heads on the Essex-street knockers overheard. The wise Mansfield has passed this way, and Thurlow, who looked wiser

than any man ever was; Brougham with the dance of Saint Vitus in his ugly nose, and Adolphus, hot and angry from recent wrangle; great rich lawyers and poor hungry ones have trod these stones; lord chancellors that were to be yet never were; and needy ambitious men eating their own hearts out in the cruel waitings and deferred hopes of the most disappointing of all professions. Talk of purgatory! There is no place where men have suffered so much as they have in the purlieus of the Temple, and not even up Holborn-hill (the road to Tyburn) have heavier hearts come than up that street south of the Strand, and westward of Temple Bar.

In the reign of Edward the Second the Bishops of Exeter built a palace in Essex-street. Walter Stapleton, the Lord Treasurer of England and Bishop of Exeter, trying to defend London for King Edward against the Queen Isabella, who had brought an army from France to chase away the Spencers, the evil counsellors of her husband, the enraged Londoners sacked and burnt the bishop's palace. The bishop himself, on his way to take sanctuary at St. Paul's, was torn from his horse by a mob, stripped of his armour, and beheaded at Cheapside.

Lord Paget, Henry the Eighth's ambassador, afterwards had the palace. After him came the Duke of Norfolk, who was beheaded by Elizabeth for his political intrigues with Mary Queen of Scots. Then the Earl of Leicester lived here in splendour. Spenser dedicated one of his poems to his patron, Leicester, whom he eulogises in his Prothalamion.

Near to the Temple stands a stately place,
Where I gayned gifts and goodly grace,
Of that great lord who there was wont to dwell,
Whose want too well now feels my friendless case.

Leicester left his Essex-street house to his step-son, the Earl of Essex, who here brooded over the plot that soon brought him to the scaffold. Essex was the grandchild of a favourite cousin of Queen Elizabeth. The mother of Essex, a bad woman, took the Earl of Leicester for her second husband, and for her third, Christopher Blount, her master of the horse, with whom she had long intrigued. The sister of Essex, a still more infamous woman, had been the mistress of Lord Montjoy. Essex's wife, Frances Sidney, the widow of Sir Philip, was a woman, as Mr. Dixon says, of inferior birth, without beauty, youth, or fortune. Honours fell thick on the young noble. At twenty-two he was Master

of the Horse. He became a member of the queen's council, Earl Marshal of England, General of the Forces in Ireland, and the recipient of three hundred thousand pounds in money. He fought in France and Portugal, and at Cadiz covered himself with glory. Yet Essex was not so handsome as Elizabeth's other favourites. He stooped, and was careless in his dress; he walked awkwardly, and danced worse; his morals were more than questionable. Still he won the queen by his fearless frankness, as he won friends by his warm-hearted generosity and candour, his affability and noble courtesy. Spenser Essex especially favoured, and in a sonnet preceding the first three books of the Faery Queen, the poet promised at the conclusion of that great poem

To make more famous memory
Of thy heroic parts.

In the Prothalamion, Spenser concludes with a compliment to the possessor of Essex House:

Yet therein now doth lodge a worthy peer,
Great England's glory, and the world's wide wonder,
Whose dreadful name late thro' all Spain did thunder,
'And Hercules' two pillars standing near
Did make to quake and fear.
Fair branch of honour, flower of chivalry,
That fillest England with the triumph'd of fame,
Joy have thou of thy noble victory,
And endless happiness of thine own name.

Nor was Essex ungrateful for this wreath of laurel. Why Spenser died poor and broken-hearted, on his return from the great misfortunes that fell upon him like thunderbolts in Ireland, will now probably never be known, but certain it is that the earl paid for his funeral and tomb in Westminster Abbey. Shakespeare, too, the friend of Fulke Greville and Southampton, the earl's sworn comrades, celebrates Essex in the Chorus at the commencement of the Fifth Act of Henry the Fifth, and falsely prophesies his victorious return from Ireland:

Were now the general of our gracious empress
(As in good time he may) from Ireland coming,
Bringing rebellion brouched upon his sword,
How many would the peaceful city quit
To welcome him?

After the death of Leicester, Essex became a power at court, in spite of his wilfulness and rash heat of temper. Scarcely twenty-one, he rode at Tilbury, the captain-general of the cavalry. Always crossing the queen's wishes, he joined the unsuccessful expedition to Lisbon in 1581, and commanded at the unsuccessful siege of Rouen. But these discomforts he repaid by his chivalrous gallantry against Spain in 1596, when

fourteen thousand English took Cadiz, destroyed thirteen Spanish men-of-war, and obtained from the citizens one hundred and twenty thousand crowns as ransom. But this money was divided among the adventurers, and Essex, owing to the opposition of Cecil's friends, failed to snap up the Spanish treasure fleet, with its rich cargo of twenty million dollars. Sent to Ireland to check Tyrone, Essex failed in every attempt, and began, it was rumoured, to hold traitorous communication with the rebels—worst of all, after thwarting the queen in every scheme, he suddenly returned to England, contrary to the royal commands. Essex was hastening fast to his ruin. In Ireland he had all but resolved to embark two thousand cavalry, land in Wales, and, marching to London, to drive Raleigh, Cecil, and Cobham from the court. Despising the faithful counsels of Bacon and Greville, Essex hurried on fast to destruction.

At a secret meeting in February, 1601, at Drury House (Drury-lane), this rash and wilful man, estimating his sworn adherents at one hundred and twenty earls, lords, knights, and gentlemen, agreed to give up his plan of seizing the Tower, and decided to surprise the queen at Whitehall, and force her to disgrace Burleigh, Raleigh, and Cobham, and restore her disgraced favourite. He relied much on Sheriff Smith, who had the power of calling to his side one thousand men of the London train-bands. The Puritans were all for him, and many of the Roman Catholics were won by the conspirator's promises of increased toleration. Other men he allured by assurances that Cobham and Cecil were in favour of the Infanta of Spain as the successor of Elizabeth. The Scottish king there can be no doubt secretly favoured his attempt.

The plot was ripe on Saturday, the 7th of February, 1601. Essex, sending his secretary to rouse his citizen friends, arranged his final plans. Sir Christopher Blount undertook to seize Whitehall Gate, Sir John Davis the Hall, and Sir Charles Danvers the guard-room and presence-chamber. Essex was then to come out from the Mews (site of the National Gallery), and having secured an access, to seek the queen, and humbly demand that she should drive from her his chief enemies, whom he would then have brought to trial, or more probably summarily have killed. He then proposed to assemble a parliament and name a successor. But the court had already information of the plot, and Essex,

being sent for by the council, resolved on making his desperate attempt the next day (Sunday), when the citizens would be assembled for the sermon at St. Paul's Cross. That night secret messengers were employed rallying Essex's friends and convening them to the morrow's meeting. The next morning early there came from west and east to Essex House the Earls of Rutland and Southampton, Lords Sandys and Montegale, and about three hundred other gentlemen. Essex told these partisans that plots were laid against his life, that the City was for him, and that he had resolved to force his way to the queen, and tell her his dangers. But an unexpected incident disturbed his plans. A little before ten o'clock on that quiet Sunday morning the excited crowd of hot-headed noblemen, turbulent soldiers, and musketeers, were startled by the appearance at the Strand Gate of four messengers from the court. Egerton, the Lord Keeper, the Earl of Worcester, Knollys, the Comptroller of the Household, and Lord Chief Justice Popham, demanded admission. At ten, the lord mayor and aldermen met for the Paul's Cross sermon, and after sermon, Essex was to meet them and call on them to follow him to Whitehall. There was no time to lose in parley. Rough scowling men, by the order of Essex, admitted the four dignitaries, but excluded all their attendants except the purse-bearer, and on the Lord Keeper asking, in the name of the queen, the meaning of the turbulent concourse, Essex, speaking loud, replied:

"Wait is laid for my life. There were some hired to murder me in my bed. I am traitorously dealt with, and my letters have been counterfeited both with hand and seal. Wherefore we have met here together to defend ourselves, and preserve our lives, since neither my patience nor misery will appease the malice of my adversaries except they drink my blood also."

The Lord Keeper, begging Essex to relate his grievances fully, that they might be inquired into; the crowd began to cry impatiently:

"Let us be gone; come. They abuse your patience; they betray you, my lord. The time hastens. Come."

The Lord Keeper, turning to them, put on his cap, and charged them all, in the queen's name, to lay down their weapons. Essex then entered the house, as if for a conference, followed by the four delegates and his partisans, the excited crowd shouting:

"Kill them! kill them! Keep them for pledges. Throw the great seal out of the window. Shut them up fast enough."

After passing through two rooms guarded by musketeers, Essex led them into a back parlour, and, placing the four courtiers under the guard of Sir John Davis, Sir Gilly Merrick, Francis Tresham, and Lord Salisbury, said to them:

"Be patient but a little, my lords. I must needs go into the City to take order with the lord mayor and the sheriffs."

The doors were then bolted on the prisoners, and returning into the court, Essex, about eighty knights and gentlemen, and two hundred retainers, wrapping their cloaks about their left arms, and drawing their swords, rushed through Temple Bar into the City. In Fleet-street he was joined by the Earl of Bedford and Lord Cromwell; but no citizen listened to his appeal to instantly arm, though they let him pass at Ludgate, when he shouted:

"For the queen! For the queen! There is wait laid for my life. Raleigh and Cobham would take my life. England is bought and sold by the Spaniards!"

At St. Paul's Cross he found no sermon preaching, for, by the lord mayor's orders, the citizens had remained at home. Then he rushed up Cheapside, shouting, "For the queen, my mistress!" till he reached the house of Sheriff Smith, in Fenchurch-street, where he expected to find one thousand of the train-bands. But there was no sheriff to be found, and there were no train-bands. Fretting and chafing, the earl, as Camden tells us, retired, hot and fatigued, to a private room, "to compose his spirits, and change his shirt."

In the mean time the court had not been idle. The guards had been mustered, the palace gates closed and barricaded, the neighbouring streets and passages barred with chains and blocked with carriages. With difficulty had the brave old queen been prevented from riding herself to meet the traitors. About two o'clock, Lord Burleigh, with the Garter King-at-Arms, the Earl of Cumberland, and Sir Thomas Ward, had entered the City and proclaimed Essex and all his accomplices traitors, offering a reward of one thousand pounds for his apprehension, and immediate pardon to all who at once deserted him, and returned to their duty. Essex, hearing of this, instantly rushed into the street, crying that England was to be given to the Infanta of Spain, and exhorting the citizens to take arms; but all in vain—no voice replied, no

sword was drawn, no doors flew open. The friends at his back were thawing away fast; the Lord Admiral, it was reported, was gathering a force quickly together. Reluctantly, with broken spirits, Essex resolved to return to his home, and by means of his prisoners secure some terms from the angry queen. But already musketeers and pikemen held Ludgate, and barred his passage. There were soldiers also at the chained-up road by the west gate of St. Paul's, headed by Sir J. Levison. At this juncture, Sir Ferdinand Gorges, careful of himself, persuaded Essex to let him return to Essex House to release the prisoners, and intercede with them to the queen for the earl's pardon before blood was shed, and before the queen felt sure that the City might not rise. Essex granted liberty to Popham only, but eventually Gorges released the whole four, and took them by boat to Whitehall, to procure his own pardon.

When Essex found his way barred between St. Paul's and Ludgate, his hot blood fired, and, calling for his horse, and shouting, "Charge, charge!" he drew his sword and told Blount to attack. Matches were blown, and swords flashed out. Blount killed a soldier. Henry Tracey, "a young man very dearly loved by the earl," was stretched dead on the ground, and several citizens fell. The earl, with a bullet-hole through his hat, fell back with some fifty followers only left, and, retreating to Queenhithe, took boat and returned to Essex House. Enraged to find the hostages gone, Essex then began to fortify his house on all sides, vainly expecting help from the Londoners. He burnt many papers, and especially one with a few lines of dangerous matter contained in a black purse, which he always carried about him. There was little time for preparation. Almost instantly the house was invested. The Earls of Cumberland and Lincoln moved on the Strand side, with the Lords Thomas Howard, Grey, Burleigh, Compton, and a strong body of horse and foot, while on the Thames and garden side there gathered the Lord Admiral himself, his son Effingham, Lord Cobham, Sir John Stanhope, Sir Robert Sidney, and Mr. Fulke Greville. All being prepared for storming, the drums sounded for a parley, and the Lord Admiral sent Sir Robert Sidney to summon the two earls, who came out upon the leads to hear the terms proposed.

"Dear cousin," said Southampton, "to whom would you have us yield? To our enemies? That were to thrust ourselves

into peril willingly. To the queen? Then we should confess ourselves guilty before we have offended." Sidney replied that the house was not strong; that the Lord Admiral had already sent to the Tower for powder and shot, and if that prevailed not that the house would be blown up. Then the Earl of Essex came and said

"Judge you, brother, whether it be a grief or no to a man descended as myself, who have lived in account with her majesty as I have done, to be pined up so long without any cause, and to be trodden under foot of every base upstart; far more than that, to have my life so narrowly sought by them. Would it not grieve you? Yes, yes, I am sure it would. Well, it is no matter, death will end all, and death shall be most welcome."

Sidney then offered (not to let the innocent perish with the guilty) to allow the countess, Lady Rich, Essex's sister, and the maid-servants, who were "shrieking and howling and making a terrible noise within doors," to depart. This was about nine o'clock. The earl accepted the offer, on condition that two hours should be allowed him to unbarricade the doors to let out the ladies, and another hour to close the doors up again. By this time powder, shot, and guns had come from the Tower, and a cannon had been dragged upon the tower of St. Clement's Church, and planted there to pour a plunging fire upon Essex House. Affairs were desperate indeed with the discomforted rebels, when old Lord Sandys proposed a desperate sally, either to cut a way through their enemies, or to die, as brave men, he said, ought to die, sword in hand. But Essex having at last won the Lord Admiral's consent to treat them as honourable prisoners, and to secure to them a just trial, threw open the doors, and on his knees surrendered his weapon. It was not safe to start to London Bridge that night, as the water was dark and stormy, so Essex and Southampton were sent to Lambeth Palace, and the next morning removed to the Tower. To the archbishop Essex spoke with scorn and anger of the faint-hearted citizens, saying that they were a base people, that he had trampled up and down the City without resistance, that he would undertake with four hundred choice men to overrun London, as he had passed many of their chained and barricaded lanes on his way from Ludgate to Queenhithe, without one blow offered at him. Two days after Cecil wrote to a friend: "Even when a false alarm was brought to the queen that

the City was revelled with them; she was never more amazed than she would have been to have heard of a fray in Fleet-street." Essex was taken on the 8th of February, on the 19th he was tried at Westminster Hall, found guilty, and executed on Tower Green on the 25th, at seven-thirty A.M., in the presence of about a hundred noblemen and gentlemen, Raleigh, from the armoury, watching the axe drop, and shedding tears when the head of his enemy fell. Essex died repentant, confessing his "great bloody crying infectious sin," but denying any intention to offer violence to the person of the queen. Marshal Biron, who died fifteen months after on the scaffold, raging like a madman, ridiculed the behaviour of Essex, and said he died like a clergyman rather than a soldier. Southampton was reprieved. Cuff, the secretary of Essex, and the main cause of his ruin, and Merrick, his steward, perished, as did Blount, the earl's step-father, and Davers, the friend of Southampton.

The son of Essex was that parliamentary general, whose divorced wife cruelly poisoned Sir Thomas Overbury in the Tower. The general's son was that unfortunate man who, mixed up in the Rye House Plot, shot himself in the Tower. The Earl of Hertford lived in Essex House for a time, and after him, the Lord Treasurer Southampton, and the Lord Keeper Bridgman. Doctor Barbon bought the place in the reign of George the First, and divided it into separate houses. The Cottonian Library was kept here in the reign of Queen Anne, in a house afterwards occupied by Patterson, the bookseller, a friend of Johnson's. In the same room Charles Dibdin commenced his entertainment, and first sang the song of Poor Jack.

It was long suspected that the Pretender had secretly visited London, at least, on one occasion, after the defeat at Culloden, that finally crushed his party. Scott, with his fine eye for the picturesque, has made him a spectator, in disguise, of the coronation of George the Third, in 1761; but his real visit took place in September, 1750. This was proved by the publication, in 1818, of the interesting and trustworthy anecdotes of Doctor William King, the Principal of St. Mary's Hall, Oxford, and a leading man among the Jacobites. The doctor says: "September, 1750, I received a note from my Lady Primrose, in Essex-street, who desired to see me immediately. As soon as I waited on her she led me into her dressing-room, and presented me to—Prince

Charles. If I was surprised to find him there, I was still more astonished when he acquainted me with the action which had induced him to hazard a journey to England at this juncture. The impotence of his friends, who were in exile, had formed a scheme which was impracticable. No preparation had been made, nor was anything ready to carry it into execution. He was soon convinced that he had been deceived, and therefore, after a stay in London of five days only, he returned to Italy." Doctor King, who afterwards corresponded for many years with the unfortunate scion of an unfortunate race, describes the prince as tall and well made, but stooping a little. He had a handsome face and good eyes, and exactly resembled the busts which were sold of him in Red Lion-street, so much so that when he came and took tea at Doctor King's lodgings, the doctor's servant, after the prince had gone, remarked how like the new visitor was to the busts of the Pretender. One day, in the park, a man recognised him and went down on his knees to kiss his hand, which served as a warning to the prince to be off to Rome. Doctor King describes Prince Charles as having a quick apprehension, and speaking French, Italian, and English, and with rather a foreign accent. "In a polite company," he says, "the prince would not pass for a genteel man;" and he sums up his character with these fatal words. "I never heard him express any noble or benevolent sentiment, the certain indication of a great soul and a good heart, or to discover any sorrow or compassion for the misfortunes of so many worthy men who had suffered in his cause."

It is now certain that George the Second, through his spies, knew of this visit, but was too generous to seize his then almost powerless enemy.

The following anecdote may be relied on. The king one day asked Lord Holderness, the Secretary of State, where Charles Edward then was.

"Upon my word, sire," was the startled reply, "I—I—don't exactly know. I suppose in Italy; but I'll consult my last despatches."

"Pooh, pooh! man," said the king; "don't trouble your head about the despatches. I'll tell you where he is; he is now at No. —, Essex-street, Strand, and was last night at Lady Primrose's rout. What shall we do with him?"

The astonished secretary proposed calling a council, but the king said, "No, no.

We can manage the business without a council. Let him stay where he is at present, and when the poor man has amused himself with looking about London, he will go home again."

The king, it is supposed, learned all the prince's schemes from his Scotch mistress, Walkenshaw, whose sister was housekeeper to the king's son, at Leicester House. This was the woman whom the Jacobites wanted to be sent to a convent, but the prince, though he did not care for her, refused to part from her. The prince and this woman both drank, and the two often quarrelled, and sometimes fought, to the scandal of their Roman neighbours. This Lady Primrose, of Essex-street, with whom the prince sought shelter when thousands of pounds were set upon his head, was, we believe, that Lady Primrose to whom Edinburgh legends say a Cagliostro of the day showed her absent husband in a mirror. He had attempted her life and fled abroad. She afterwards married Lord Stair. There was a General Primrose mixed up in the early Layer conspiracy. Henceforward, let every Jacobite take off his hat as he passes Essex-street.

The year before he died, Doctor Johnson formed a club in Essex-street, at a tavern kept by Sam, one of Thrale's old servants. The club met three times a week, and the forfeit for non-attendance was twopence. Sir John Hawkins spitefully called it "a low ale-house association," but Windham, Daines Barrington, Boswell, and Doctor Brocklesby, were members. Sir Joshua refused to join, probably because Barry, who had insulted him, was one of the circle. When Boswell was put up Johnson happily designated him as a "clubable man." Towards the end of his life the great lexicographer grew more than ever afraid of solitude, and was glad of a club so conveniently near Bolt-court. The meetings continued for many years.

One of the celebrated characters of Essex-street in Johnson's time was Doctor George Fordyce, a physician of great learning and vast appetite. For twenty years he dined daily at Dolly's Chop-House, and like a very Polyphemus, washed down his huge solitary meal with a tankard of strong ale, a quarter of a pint of brandy, and a whole bottle of port. After these potations he would quietly walk to his house in Essex-street, and deliver an admirable lecture to his pupils.

The golden days of the street have long since passed; its glorious youth has sunk

into a decorous, respectable, quiet old age; nobles have yielded to lawyers, and legal probably Essex-street will remain. Blue bags have ousted cloth of gold, and the redundant lawyers of the Temple have spread like an inundation over the sloping street.

WESTERN SLANG.

IN a recent number of *ALL THE YEAR ROUND** we gave some specimens of American slang phrases, drawing largely for our matter on Doctor Bartlett's Dictionary of Americanisms, but by no means exhausting a very copious subject. Even America is too large to have one wide-spread and universally understood slang. Every section of it has its own peculiar expressions, which the mode of life of the people have raised up in its speech. Most copious of all, perhaps, is that of the Great West, and most expressive is that of the gold miners, who dot the Californian and British Columbia mountain sides. Here the new life, overlaying that of the old Spaniards and fur traders, has called into being new and peculiar expressions, or has corrupted old ones into a new use and signification. Everywhere do we find them unintentionally cropping out in the letters of "our own correspondent," in the language of our friends fresh from that auriferous region, or even in the grave systematic works written on those portions of the world. One of these authors, Mr. Hittel, has even devoted a few paragraphs to the subject, which for our readers' amusement we have enlarged, from the storehouse of our own personal experience.

First, then, in a country where everybody works, it is natural that the idler should be contemptuously spoken of. In California the professed idler is called a "bummer." He is always well-dressed, affable in conversation, ready to "take a drink" with any one. He peculiarly affects a cut velvet waistcoat of gorgeous hue, "California diamonds" in his shirt-front, a polished quartz seal hanging at his fob, possibly a gold buckle, and has an infinite acquaintance, whom he insists on introducing to you, which introduction generally results in their being asked to take a drink. I have noticed that they always have an "interest in a quartz lead," and are "down at the Bay" to get up a company to work it. A "loafer" is not so bad as a bummer, for though a loafer may become a nuisance by calling at unseason-

* See *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*, New Series, vol. v., p. 270.

able hours at places of business, yet this does not stamp him as endowed with this permanent frailty of character, but only as being seized with a temporary idleness. A bummer, on the contrary, is a low, disreputable, lazy character, much equivalent to our "sponge." A good number of men now filling high places in the land have been, in their Californian days, bummers. For instance, I once asked a Californian if he was acquainted with General Blank, at that time a celebrated commander in the civil war, whom I knew to have been once in the country, and what sort of fellow he was. "Oh, yes," he knew him. "In fact, I've got his note at the present moment for forty-five dollars I loaned him five years ago. The general was nothing better than a darned bummer, mister!" Again, all readers of American election literature must have remembered with what furious venom Western papers described, about two years ago, an afterwards successful candidate for the presidency, as having been in California, after he left the army, a "regular whisky bummer!"

"On it" is a peculiar and expressive Californian phrase. A man who is "on it" is generally looked upon as a "sealy" customer, and I regret, for the honour of the legal profession, that an indignant Californian litigant frequently finds it necessary to apply the phrase to his attorney. A man may be "on the make" when he is keen after acquiring filthy lucre; "on the fight" when he is combatively inclined; "on the shoot" when ready with his revolver; or "on the splurdge" when, under the influence, more or less, of alcoholic excitement, he is driving furiously around town in a buggy, halting at every other "saloon," "standing" champagne "to the boys," smashing a mirror or two, and generally "spending his money like a man"—or a donkey. When a woman is talked about as being "on it," it is invariably understood that she has fallen into evil ways.

The occupation of the gold-digger has suggested to him new expressions to signify to his friends his desire for them to partake of vinous hospitality with him. He prays them "to put in a blast," and you in your turn, as you lift up your glass, are civil enough to say to your host, "Here's to you, old man, and hopin' your pay dirt'll pan* out gay;" in other words,

* A "pan" is a metal dish, in which the digger washes out a test quantity of earth or gravel, and then judges his mine by the result. In America, a "claim" is said to be worth so many "cents to the pan," just as in Australia it is talked of as yielding so many "pennyweights to the bucket."

that the earth in which he is working may wash out rich supplies of gold-dust and nuggets. At other times, the same hospitable wish to partake of stimulants with any one is indicated by the rather more generally used expressions of "take a smile," signifying that you are desired to drive dull care away in the flowing bowl, or you are asked "to nominate your pisin;" or, as somebody takes your arm at the corner of the main street of Diggerburg, you are requested, in a cheery tone of voice, to "hist in a drop of pisin," the two latter phrases being intended to express the popular opinion regarding the quality of the whisky; also vulgarly known as "chain-lightning," "mountain howitzer," "tangle leg," and "tarantula juice." In those parts of the world whisky is not judged by Sikes's hydrometer, or any such puerile test, but by the distance a man can walk after partaking of a certain quantity of it. Tradition asserts that a certain Southerner of bibulous propensities used to "keep a nigger" for the express purpose of "trying the whisky on him;" if the Ethiopian survived the dose for a reasonable time, his master ventured to partake, considering the beverage not of mortal intensity! It is really wonderful how many expressions thirsty mankind have coined to denote the act of partaking of stimulants. An antiquarian friend only the other day read over to me a list of no less than sixty-seven distinct expressions used in Scotland alone to signify the drinking of whisky. This list might be materially enlarged on the Pacific Coast, where every interest has its own expressions. For instance, in Honolulu your friend the whaler will ask you "to take a fid," and you in return will reply, as you help yourself out of a case-bottle in his cabin, "Well, old salt, here's two hundred barrels!" The universal reply to all these compliments being "Drink hearty!"

Spanish expressions naturally supply a large quota of Californian slang phrases, which have got perfectly incorporated into every-day language, and can hardly be classed as vulgar. For instance, the fence or corral in which mules and cattle are confined, has supplied a verb in common use. When a man is cornered in giving utterance to some untenable proposition, he is said to be "corraled," when a horse thief is caught, he is "corraled," and a successful "operator" on the stock exchange will be described as having "corraled" all the shares in the Root-Hog-or-Die Quartz

Mining Company. A farm is universally called a "ranch," derived from the Spanish "rancho," and a farmer a "rancher," from the Spanish equivalent "ranchero." Numerous also are the Indian aboriginal words which have got incorporated in the language, especially in the British possessions, where the natives are much more numerous than the whites, and on friendly social terms with the latter. In some parts of the country, beside numerous Indian names, still retained for localities, many words in daily use are derived from some one or other of the native dialects. A man talks of having no "chickamen," or money, on his person, and will indignantly talk of the assumptions of the "tyhees," or great men, and even coins a noun, "tyheicism," to denote this arrogance of the tyhees.

We should tire our readers' patience out, did we go over the various expressions used in the gold-digger's every-day life; how he takes a "square meal" when he comes to his inn, or how when he gets into hard circumstances he is "dead broke," or "caves in," or "goes up a flume." To show the application of some of these odd expressions, perhaps we cannot do better than to parody in miner English a portion of a proclamation of his Excellency the Governor of British Columbia, anent some mining regulations, which lies before us. With this we will conclude this brief survey of the wide and fresh field of Western slang.

**PROCLAMATION! HAVING THE FORCE OF LAW,
YOU BET!**

Whereas, a change in the mining laws is expedient. Be it enacted as follows:

1. That all former proclamations are hereby repealed and "played out."

Interpretation clause.—In the construction of this act the word "guy" shall mean the governor of this colony, and "com-mish" shall mean the commissioner for the time being. The words "fizzled," "played out," "pettered," "caved," and "gone up a flume," shall respectively mean, when applied to a mining claim, that the same is worthless; and when applied to an individual, that he is ruined, helpless, dead, or in debt, and the terms "dead broke" and "busted," shall, for the purposes of this act, be construed to mean the same thing. That the words "pile," "the dust," "the colour," and "bottom dollars," shall be construed to mean the current coin of this realm.

The term "free miner" shall mean every

person entitled to mine. The term "on it" shall imply a willingness to buy, sell, or get drunk; and "on the make" shall mean a determination to make money, honestly, if you can; if you can't—make money; "on the sell" shall mean a willingness to sell, and "on the buy" a willingness to purchase.

The term "you bet" shall be used to remove any doubt which may possibly exist in the mind of the individual addressed; and you "bet your life" shall be applied in the same way, but shall be more conclusive; and the term "you bet your boots" shall be equivalent to "you bet your life;" and the term "you bet your bottom dollar" shall, for the purposes of this act, mean "your life," or "your boots." The word "chain-lightning" shall mean very ardent spirits; and "mountain howitzer" shall mean liquor that kills at over one thousand yards; and "scorpion juice" and "tarantula juice" shall be construed to mean "mountain howitzer," or "chain-lightning," and "drinks for the crowd" shall mean any and all of the foregoing, for the persons present, but not any others.

That "in a horn" shall be equivalent to the old classical term of "over the left;" and, for the purposes of this act, "in a horn" shall be equivalent to "in a hog's eye." These terms shall imply doubt, and be equivalent to "no you don't."

That the term "vamoose the ranch" shall mean that the individual referred to has left for parts unknown; and "slope" shall be equivalent to "vamoose the ranch;" and "make tracks" shall, for the purposes of this act, be equally as expressive as the two foregoing terms.

That the term "got the dead wood on him" shall not refer to any kind of timber whatever, dead or alive, but shall be used when one individual has obtained a fair or unfair advantage over another; and the term "got the bulge on him" shall be as strong as "getting the dead wood on him," and getting either the "bulge" or "dead wood on him," may result from "sloping," "making tracks," or "vamoosing the ranch."

That "spotted," when applied to an individual, shall have no reference to the state of the skin of any white man, or any spot thereon, but shall mean that he is watched; and, when applied to mining, shall mean that the gold is scattered; and the term "biz" shall mean business.

That "sock it to him" shall be equiva-

lent to the old word "punish;" and "give him fits" shall be equivalent to "sock it to him;" provided also, that the word "fits" shall not include apoplexy or epilepsy.

That "jawbone" shall mean credit, provided also that the size, shape, and contour of such "jawbone" shall not, for the purposes of this act, be material.

That "nare a colour" shall be equivalent to "dead broke," and there shall be no difference between "nare a colour" and "nare a red."

That the phrase "there's a heap of trouble on the old man's mind" shall mean that the individual referred to is either "gone up a flume," "pettered," or that he has "struck the bed-rock pitching" the wrong way; and a "young man" shall, for the purposes of this act, be an "old man," and the feminine gender shall be included in the masculine, and both in the neuter.

That "bully for you," or "bully for him," shall mean a term of approval; and "good on your head," or "good on his head," shall mean the same thing.

That the terms "old boss," "doc," "judge," "col'nel," "cap," and "old boss," are all equivalent, and the term "or any other man," shall have no definite meaning, and may be applied indiscriminately to all things.

And "slum-gullion" shall mean clay; "pay dirt," dirt containing gold; and "good prospects" shall not mean a pleasing landscape, but plenty of "pay dirt;" and "wash-boulders," "wash-gravel," and "bed-rock pitching," shall mean indications of gold somewhere.

That a "jumper" shall not mean a person who indulges in the active exercise of jumping, but shall mean a person who possesses himself of another man's claim because it is paying; and an invalid, or cripple, or woman, may be a "jumper."

2. It shall be lawful for the guv, you bet, to appoint one or two more commishes, as he may think proper, to transact the biz of the mines of this colony.

3. That no jumper shall hereafter be allowed to indulge in that exercise, and if the commish shall find him on it, he shall have power to sock it to him, or fine him drinks for the crowd, you bet your life.

4. That all honest miners, who are on the buy, may purchase more than two claims from those who are on the sell, provided also that both parties may or may not be on the make.

5. That any honest miner who shall, after the passing of this act, allow any

other miner to get the dead wood on him, shall, you bet your boots, upon complaint made to the commish that there's a heap of trouble on the old man's mind, be spotted as a muggins, and be ordered in consequence to pay a fine of two ounces, or, in default of payment, catch fits, and the commish shall approve of the conduct of the one that's on it, by saying "bully for you," and may add at his pleasure, "or any other man."

6. Not finished, and therefore this act is to save time.

Issued under our seal of Cariboo, this ninth day of May, and the tenth year of the mines.

By the Guv's command,
X. Y. Z., Boss of the Colonial Office.

God save the Queen, and good on her head!

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LXXXVI. LADY VERNON LEAVES
ROYDON.

"THIS is Mr. Dawe, please, my lady," said Latimer, and withdrew softly.

"How do you do, Mr. Dawe?" said the well-known sweet voice from the darkened part of the room; "I'm suffering from headache; but take a chair, where there is a little light, and I'll come as near as I can bear."

He saw a white figure moving slowly towards him; and soon it emerged in the twilight; and Lady Vernon appeared. She had a loose grey dress on, of a very thick soft silk. She pointed to a chair, which accordingly Dawe took; she herself sat down, and appeared a little out of breath.

He was shocked at the change he observed. She had grown thin, and it seemed to him stooped, and was deadly pale except for a small hectic patch in each cheek, which used to come only with agitation. Her eyes looked larger and fiercer, but had the glassy look that strangely suited her peaked features.

She looked sinister as the woman of Ender. He thought the hand of death was on her.

He relented, though his brown corded face and prominent eyes showed no sign; and he said:

"You look ill, Barbara; you must be ill. Who is attending you?"

"No one; I prescribe for myself; it is not anything serious; and I know what suits me."

"You ought to have the best advice from town," he persisted. "And—and, Barbara, I have known you in your cradle; I have had you on my knee when you were a little child; you'll shake hands with me."

He had approached, with his brown hand extended.

"Another time; not to-day," she said, coldly; "pray take my own account of it; I am *not* seriously ill; and be kind enough not to tell my friends that I am dying; I'm bored to death by calls and notes; I shall be quite well in a week. What about Elwyn? Do say at once; I implore of you, come to the point."

"I find that Elwyn Howard, or Vivian, your son, is the person who has married Miss Ethel Tintern."

"I knew it, I guessed it," she said after a pause. "There is always a shock when evil surmises turn out true; but I was sure it was so."

"I had a letter this morning from Miss Medwyn," says Mr. Dawe. "She says that Damian pronounces Maud perfectly well, and has sent her away in Maximilla's care from Glarewoods."

"Mr. Damian is doting; but that doesn't excuse his writing libels," said Lady Vernon, flushing a bright scarlet, and then growing deadly pale. "I had a letter of insinuation and insult from him this morning, which he shall rue. I'm glad Maud is set at liberty without my sanction; let her kill me, or kill herself; what does it matter, compared with the tragedy she threatened, and which is now impossible!"

Mr. Dawe nodded, and in a few moments said:

"I have seen Mr. Tintern."

"The wretch!" whispered she, looking down steadfastly on the floor, with cheeks still flushed, and baleful eyes; you might have fancied a Canidia looking down on the blood of her enemy. "He was the contriver of all that misery. He thought that you would provide for the young man. He is utterly false."

"I believe he had quite other intentions for the young lady," said Dawe.

"Don't believe it; what better could a country squire do for his daughter? Mr. Tintern never goes straight to anything. You never discover what he intends, except by his bad acting. And to think of their having caught my beautiful boy in their toils! When he came here ill, he looked so like my own noble Elwyn, the sight of him almost broke my heart. You must bring him to see me; I have made up my

mind to tell him everything. He shall know his father, and his poor, broken-hearted mother."

"Well, Barbara, I fear you are exerting yourself too much. One thing I mention for your consideration. Use your power of appointment under the will in favour of Tintern, and you can dictate his settlements for your son, and thus provide for him handsomely."

"It is too late. I executed a deed which excludes him irrevocably; and it is in Mr. Coke's custody."

"You might have consulted me, or some one, with more caution than yourself, Barbara, before taking such a step," said Dawe, after a pause.

"It is taken, and no power on earth can recall it," she said, coldly.

"It is a pity," said Dawe. After a short silence, "I am told there is not a nicer girl in England than Ethel Tintern."

"I hope she mayn't live long," said Lady Vernon, in her cold tones. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Let His justice be done, and my poor Elwyn released from the wicked companion who deceived him. Ill as I am," she continued, after a pause, "I have written to Mr. Coke to come down to consult upon the letter of that slanderous old man, Mr. Damian; I have walked with God all my days, why will he not spare me one drop in this dreadful cup? I have lived a life of virtue. I have done my duty. I have nothing to retract; nothing to repent of. I will see Maud's face no more. She has never been a child to me. She has been the source of half my misery. Another parent would leave her with a curse. I turn from her in silence. Good people understand and honour me. The wicked I trample under my feet. 'These speak evil of those things which they know not.'" She made her quotation with a low utterance, and with a slow and bitter emphasis. She was talking, as it were, to herself. "Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, and perished in the gain-saying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity. Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness—for ever."

She turned as she said this, and Mr. Dawe thought she was weeping, for he heard one or two little sobs.

Latimer, a minute after, in the adjoining room, heard a hoarse voice calling her in

strange loud accents. At sound of this discordant summons, through Latimer's brain, with a sure omen, flashed a dreadful suspicion.

Now she is in the room, she does not know how, stooping over the chair, calling distractedly, "My lady! my lady!" in an ear that will never hear sound again. She is holding her up in the chair, but the head sinks and rolls, this way or that, as the weight inclines. "'Tis a faint! 'tis a faint! my God! 'Tis only a faint!" Latimer cries wildly in her terror.

Mr. Dawe has thrown open the shutter, the window itself; and the fitful autumn air eddies in, and the elegant little lace coiffure and its long, dark, grey-and-blue silk ribbons flutter about the dead face and open mouth. Mr. Dawe has sprinkled water on her face. It streams over it as rain would over a marble bust.

Latimer despairs; she cries out with terror, "What is it, what is it? Is she gone? Oh! she's gone, she *is* gone! she's gone!"

Mr. Dawe at the door is calling for help, and soon many feet and voices are in the room. Strange liberties are taken with awful Lady Vernon's sanctuary. The shutters are thrown open, the curtains dragged back, furniture is wheeled out of the way, huddled together. "My lady's" Bible lies flat on its face on the floor with its covers open, beside a gilt candlestick and broken candle; broken, too, lies the pretty malachite paper-cutter which dead and buried Vicar Howard owned long since, which he had given her three-and-twenty years ago, and which ever since his death has always been beside her. On the carpet are strewn letters and two or three books, and the gold mounted ink-bottle lies on its side on the rich table-cover, as it were in a swoon, and bleeding ink profusely, quite neglected.

The great and faultless Lady Vernon is by this time on the sofa, a shawl over her feet, her head propped with the pillow, and something under her chin to close her mouth. There are no disclosures of "making up." The tints on her cheek fade naturally into the proper hue of death.

This solitary lady with one great and untold affection among the living, one passionate affection among the dead, is more alone than ever now. Her pride, her passion, her strong affections, her wickedness, the whole story of her life, signed, sealed, and delivered, and passed out of her keeping now.

A servant is galloping by this time half-way to Shillingsworth to bring the doctor, the Roydon doctor not yet having returned, and Mr. Dawe wishing some skilled inspection, in the case of so great a lady.

All goes on as usual. The little town recovers from its momentary stupor. The scepticism of startled people subsides, and the great conviction is established. Lady Vernon of Roydon is dead.

Mr. Dawe remains at the Vernon Arms; Mr. Coke arrives, letters are flying in all directions. Lady Vernon's will has never been executed. She had not been able quite to make up her mind upon some points, and had no idea that her hour was so near.

The letters that radiate from the Hall to many scores of other homes, chiefly of the great, announce that the physicians agree in referring the sad event to heart-complaint, developed with unusual rapidity.

CONCLUSION.

THE remainder of my story pretty nearly tells itself.

In Lady Vernon's secret marriage with the vicar, Elywyn Howard, there was no taint of guilt. There was extreme rashness. Each honestly believed that the wicked person whom he had married in his romantic nonage, and lived with little more than a week, had been dead for years. Her own family had not only published her death, but sworn to the fact, and actually administered some trifling property of hers. It was not until after his marriage, not his seeking, but urged upon him by the wayward and impassioned girl, that the dreadful uncertainty of the situation was, for the first time, suspected. The story is curious, but true. The spoiled girl had revealed her passion to no one. It was not until circumstances compelled her to choose between confidence or exposure, that she disclosed her situation. Mr. Dawe was the sole confidant of her parents in this dark emergency in secret family history. By his advice the young lady and her father set out as if for a short tour on the Continent. The journey diverged and really ended in a sequestered place near a little Welsh village. Here the child of this ill-fated and invalid marriage was born. Mr. Dawe undertook to direct every particular respecting its early care, its subsequent education, and final position in life.

They were to leave in a day or two, and to return home, in a little time, by a very

wide circuit, having taken every precaution necessary for a complete mystification of the good gossips of Roydon, when who should light upon them, traversing a path through the very grounds of the house they inhabited, but about the most unlikely man in the world to be found in that sequestered corner, Sir Amyrald Vernon, the young lady's rejected suitor. He saw signs of alarm and agitation in both, on recognising him, by no means to be accounted for by an accidental meeting with a rejected lover.

They departed; but he remained, and without disclosing their real names, he made himself master of their secret. He tracked Mr. Dawe, and insisted that he should be taken into confidence, and took such a tone, that with the advice of the young lady's father, Mr. Dawe told him the facts of the case, which, painful as they were, yet supplied an answer to suspicions of a more degrading kind.

It was the possession of this secret that enabled him, after the death of the vicar, to bend the proud young lady to his will.

I now turn to Charles Marston and Maud Vernon, who, in due time, there being no longer any let or hindrance, were united. At present they live very much abroad; and, when in England, they do not stay at Roydon, which the young lady associates with many painful recollections, but at their beautiful house of Darrel Abbey.

Doctor Malkin was one of those persons whom Lady Vernon's death disappointed. He wishes very much he had been a little less active in managing that Glarewoods business. But who could have supposed that Lady Vernon would have died before the appointments she intended for him were filled up? He has no liking for the young lady. But for reasons of his own he never hints at the Glarewoods secret, and the good people of Roydon were led to believe that Maud, during her absence, had been making a little tour for her health.

Antomarchi, finding old Damian resolute against committing to him, after the disclosures of which he took so strong a view, a trust so awful as the autocracy of such an empire as Glarewoods, took steps in the Court of Chancery to restrain Mr. Damian from breaking up that establishment, and selling the house and grounds.

This attempt recoiled upon Antomarchi. The court read him an astounding lecture on the facts. The press took it up; and that able adventurer found that England was no longer a field for his talents.

I have heard various accounts of the after adventures of that brilliant rogue, some of which represent him in sore straits; others, following dark and downward paths, and picking gold and silver, but in danger, all the while, of breaking his neck, and lost sight of by the decent upper world.

Mr. Tintern is not quite ruined after all, but he has had to sell nearly all his estates, except the Grange, and a rental of about seven hundred a year. He lives in France; and refuses to see Ethel; and I heard this morning from old Puntles, whom I happened to meet, that he has just had a slight paralytic attack. His temper continues precisely in the state in which his misfortunes left it.

The Reverend Michael Doody has been presented to one of the comfortable livings in the gift of the Roydon Vernons. He is a good deal sobered, and has lost something of his wild spirits and eccentricities. But his energy and good-nature are unabated. It is said that he has cast eyes of affection on a niece of Mr. Puntles. But of this I have heard only as rumour, and must, therefore, speak with reserve.

Vivian and Ethel are as happy as any two people, except perhaps Charles Marston, now Lord Warhampton, and his good and beautiful young wife, can be. Charles and Maud have, indeed, little on earth to desire, for an heir is born to the title of Warhampton, and that heir is not without merry little companions in the nursery. Maximilla almost lives with her old friend Maud, and over the gateway of Warhampton stands, in well-chiselled relief, the time-honoured device of

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CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER II. A REVELATION.

In an old-fashioned terrace of high houses, leading off one of the principal thoroughfares of Springside, and approached oddly enough, first by a flight of crooked steps, and then by a narrow winding path, dwelt Mrs. Pickering, of whom Captain Cleethorpe had so much to say, and who has been erst known to the readers of this story as Madge Pierrepont.

In the three years which have elapsed since we last caught sight of her, she has materially improved in appearance. The rest and ease, the freedom from professional annoyances and private worry, the soft, bright, health-giving atmosphere, have had their invariably good effect, and her cheek is plumper, her eyes brighter, her figure more erect, and her footstep more light, than they have been since the days of her childhood. When she rose convalescent from the illness which attacked her on her first arrival at Springside, Madge felt that a vast amount of not merely bodily, but mental disorder, which had long been hanging around her, had passed away. Gone was that fever of expectation, gone that "restless unsatisfied longing." No longer had she to dread the arrival of bad news; no longer to await, with trembling anxiety, the caprices of a man, who, while his affection for her had departed, still possessed the right of disposing of her time and talent to suit his own purpose.

So far at least Philip Vane had kept his word. Whether by design or accident, most probably the latter (for neither in the

telegraph clerk, nor in the governess, leading a peaceful hum-drum life with her little charge, would he ever have dreamt of looking for the popular actress), he had never crossed her path. In the beneficent course of time, the early days of her married life seemed to have almost faded out from her memory, while of the later days she thought no more than as reminiscences of an ugly dream, which, from time to time, would obtrude itself upon her, only to render her, if possible, more grateful for the peaceful quiet which she then enjoyed.

Nor was Madge's tranquil life clouded by a doubt as to the wisdom of her conduct in regard to Gerald Hardinge. Whatever might have been the feelings which had animated her during that brief season, when stung by Philip's scorn, and touched by Gerald's devotion, she had hesitated what course to pursue, they were quite gone ere the doctor pronounced her to be convalescent, and she knew herself to be once more in her right mind. Closely shutting out from mental retrospection any thought of occurrences in which Philip Vane had borne a part, she yet longed occasionally to linger over the memory of her final interview with Gerald, and even over the details of that night of agony, when she had renounced all hope of ever being anything to him, perhaps of ever seeing him again. For by that renunciation she had done her duty, and was she not now reaping her reward? No trace of that passion, which, as she acknowledged to herself, she had entertained for him during those agonising hours of doubt, now remained! She could think of him—she did think of him often—with womanly tenderness and regard, so pure that the whole world might have known of it! She should like to see him, she should like to

see his wife—for he must have a wife by this time, Madge thought—she should like him to think well of her, as an old friend; to think well of her, and as a friend, but nothing more.

It is the morning after the arrival of Captain Norman at his old friend's quarters, and Madge is seated at her little table in the window looking down upon the flagged terrace-walk, with the green railings in front. Before her is her little, old-fashioned, brass-bound writing-desk, with the blotting-book lying open upon it, and on that again a little almanack, which she has been consulting. She has somewhat more colour in her cheeks than in the days when we first knew her; but there is the same bright, frank, earnest look in the eyes, and the long brown hair is as luxuriant as ever.

"Just three years ago," she said to herself, referring again to the almanack, "just three years since I fled from Wexeter, and was directed, providentially as it seems now, to this place. By that act I seem to have closed and clasped as it were the first book of my life, shutting in with it certain figures, which so far as I am concerned will, in all human probability, never appear again. There, entombed as I may say, for he is in every sense dead to me, is my husband, Philip Vane! His ghost never haunts my memory, and the only material thing I have to remind me of him is this."

As she spoke she took up a small leather note-case from the desk and looked at it contemptuously. "This note-case, which he must have left behind him on some occasion, and which contains a few cards, with his club address upon them, a strip of paper containing an odd jumble of alphabetical letters, and some betting memoranda. Why do I keep these any longer, I wonder? Better destroy them and—no!" she said, putting the papers back into the case, and shutting the case itself into the desk, "let them remain where they are; I have kept them so long that I may leave them there now, without any fear of their influencing me in favour of their late owner. To that book, too, belongs Gerald Hardinge, to whose dark blue eyes and chestnut hair this photograph—how well I recollect the day he gave it me!—does nothing like justice! And for the matter of that, to that belongs Margaret Pierpoint, and every troubled incident of her life! What a peaceful career has Mrs. Pickering's been, and how grateful ought she to be for it!"

She was interrupted by the entrance of the servant with a letter.

"From Rosa," she said to herself, as soon as the girl had gone. "It is only two days ago that I heard from her. What can have induced her, usually so chary of her correspondence, to write again so soon? There can be nothing wrong with her I trust."

She opened the letter, and read as follows:

DEAREST MADGE,—You will be surprised to hear from me again so quickly, and will imagine, either that I have taken seriously to heart the scoldings which you have so frequently given me for being so bad a correspondent, or that something is the matter. I am glad to say that the latter is certainly not the case, and I am afraid I cannot take credit for the former; but I have a piece of news for you which I cannot resist sending to you at once. This morning, on my way to the office, whom should I meet but Mr. Gerald Hardinge, looking very well, and oh, Madge, so wonderfully handsome! He was very well-dressed too, had beautiful boots and gloves, and looked what they call, quite a swell. Don't you recollect, in the old days at Wexeter, you used to say that you thought he belonged to some good family? I am sure you would have thought so if you had seen him to-day; perhaps he has been taken up and properly recognised by them?

He hardly knew me at first, and would have passed by me without speaking, but I gave such a start. It was very rude, I know, but I could not help it, Madge; and he noticed it and half stopped, and then I spoke to him by his name. He recollected me at once, then declared I had almost grown out of knowledge. He said that I always looked so delicate at Wexeter, that he never thought I should have lived, but that there was no harm in telling me that now, as, from my present appearance, there was no fear of my premature dissolution. He was very kind, and asked me all about myself, what I was doing, and where I lived—in a nice way, don't you know, Madge, without the smallest sign of *arrière pensée* about it? And he laughed when I told him about the telegraph office, and said he remembered what active fingers I used to have in the old days, when he gave me those drawing lessons. He laughed much more when I asked him whether he was at any London theatre; he could not

understand at first what I meant. When I told him that I meant as a scene-painter, he positively shouted with delight, although it was in the open street, and there were people passing all round. So then he said "no," and laughed again as he added that he had come into his property; and when I said that I hoped that had not made him give up painting altogether, he said, "he did a little now and then, but only for amusement." I have heard since, from one of our young ladies, who is very fond of art, that there were two pictures in the Exhibition this last season by Mr. Hardinge, which were very highly thought of.

Wasn't it odd, Madge, that he never once asked after you, never even mentioned your name, until I told him that Mrs. Bland was taking care of me, and then he asked where you were? I did not tell him, Madge, as you had made me promise never to tell any one, but said, in a general sort of way, that you were not living in London, said you had left the theatrical profession, and he then asked me if you were married. I did not know what to say, Madge, for that was a contingency we had never provided for, and Mr. Hardinge looked so hard at me while he spoke, that I grew confused, and stuttered and stammered before I eventually said "yes." I hope I did right, Madge, but I had no time for reflection; and as I am only partially in your confidence, not knowing your reasons for representing yourself as a widow, I could only act to the best of my ability. I thought Mr. Hardinge turned rather white when I told him, and then he slightly shrugged his shoulders, and changed the subject.

He was very kind, Madge, very kind, indeed, and all in such a nice way! He asked me if I were still fond of drawing, and when I told him that I had given it up, almost from want of time, and that my principal amusement was reading, he said that he had plenty of books, which he should be pleased to lend to me. "I will send my servant with them," he said; "I will not come myself, so that neither Mrs. Bland nor Mrs. Grundy shall be scandalised, or, better still," he added, "there is a dear old lady, who is a great friend of mine—she is rather out of health just now, but as soon as she is a little better she shall call upon you and bring them to you. I should like her to know you, Rose, and I am sure she would take a fancy to you." It was so odd to hear him call me Rose, just as he did in the old times when I was a child.

Write to me, Madge, dear, and tell me what you think of all this. I have just read over what I have written, and find it does not at all give you the notion which I wished to convey of Mr. Hardinge's niceness and kindness, of the total freedom of his manner from anything like either patronage or familiarity. Without feeling that, you may think I did wrong in telling where I lived, but I am sure that if—that you—there I cannot explain what I mean, but you will understand me.

Your loving
Rose.

P.S. Your letter just arrived about the offer of the old Indian general. I hope you intend to say "yes."

"Poor Rose," murmured Madge, as she laid down the letter; "yes, you did perfectly right, dear; you could not have done better if I had taken you wholly into my confidence, as you seem to think I ought to have done. What she told him," continued Madge, musing, "will be simply a corroboration of what I had stated in my letter to him, written on that eventful night. Turned white did he? Poor Gerald, I cannot understand that. He must surely have expected it. I have thought of him as married often enough; but I was his first love, I fancy, and that I suppose makes all the difference. Strange that I should hear this news of him just now, when I had been so recently thinking of him, and when another change in my life seems imminent."

Glancing through the letter again, she continued: "Oh, yes, I perfectly understand what Rose thinks she has failed to express. Who could understand better than I the gentleness of his manner? Who could so well appreciate the real nobility of his character? I have often thought, were I in trouble or distress, there is no one to whom I would so readily appeal; now, I mean, when the lapse of time would render impossible any misinterpretation of the nature of the application. Not married! He cannot be married, or Rose would have stated so plainly in so many words. But who can this old lady be, who is going to call upon Rose, and take an interest in her?"

"Well-dressed, and happy-looking, and only practising his art for his amusement! My old idea, then, the idea upon which Philip Vane used to harp so much, was the right one; Gerald's appearance in our theatrical circle at Wexeter was purely acci-

dental. He was well-born and well-bred, had had some quarrel with his friends, and actuated by boyish, high-spirited impulse, had run away from them, and was sowing his wild oats in a different fashion to that usually followed by young fellows of his class. Now he has returned home again, has been received by his people, and resumed his proper position. "Would they," said Madge, with a sad smile, "would they so gladly have welcomed the return of the prodigal, if he had brought back with him as his wife a stage-player, somewhat older than himself, whose family and whose antecedents were alike unknown? I think not. If I had ever for an instant been doubtful of the wisdom of the decision which I then made, the news thus brought would have settled it! Just and merciful to us both was that decision; merciful more especially to him, though bitterly hard to bear at the time, and Gerald, as it would seem from Rose's innocent account of his behaviour at the news, even now scarcely acquiesces in it. Come in!"

These last words were spoken in answer to a knock at the door.

Enter Captain Cleethorpe, carefully dressed, as befits a man particular about his appearance, who is going to call upon a pretty woman, and with his best manner, which is frank without being careless, and familiar without being impertinent.

"Good morning, Mrs. Pickering. Don't let me disturb you," he adds, waving his cane jauntily, and pointing to the letter, which Madge still holds in her hand.

"You don't disturb me in the least, Captain Cleethorpe," replied Madge; "I have already read this letter twice through."

"The writer ought to be proud to command so much of Mrs. Pickering's time and attention," said Captain Cleethorpe, with old-fashioned gallantry.

"The writer is an acquaintance of yours, my sister."

"What, pretty Miss Rose; and how is she getting on among the dials and discs, and all the wonderful telegraphic apparatus in London?"

"She is very well, and writes in excellent spirits."

"That's right; she was far too clever to waste her life in a dull provincial town."

"That's scarcely complimentary to present company, is it, Captain Cleethorpe?" said Madge, with a smile.

"My dear Mrs. Pickering, your duties lay in a different sphere, one which, in my opinion, is more important and more re-

sponsible than your sister's. See how wonderfully it has all turned out! There is no other woman in the world whom Mr. Drage would have intrusted with the charge of his little child; there is no other woman, of my acquaintance, whom I would conscientiously recommend to Sir Geoffry Heriot to fill the position about which I spoke to you the other day."

"You are very kind, Captain Cleethorpe," said Madge.

"No, I am only very frank," said the captain; "and, by the way, I want your definite reply to my proposal. I ought to write to-night, or to-morrow the latest."

"I am afraid I must ask you to give me till to-morrow; my own feeling is strongly to say yes, but I have not yet seen Mr. Drage since his return, and I am so much indebted to him that I should not think of deciding upon such an important matter without his advice and approval."

"Not yet seen Mr. Drage?" said Cleethorpe; "that's strange, he was at the Bungalow last night, when we talked the matter fully out. To be sure," he said, after a minute's consideration, "I recollect I was the only person who spoke, and Captain Norman, a friend of mine, who is staying with me, joined in the conversation, so that I did not think the padre had any opportunity of definitely expressing his opinion."

"He sent me a line saying that he would call upon me this morning, so that I shall be sure to see him."

"And within the next five minutes," said Cleethorpe, who was standing by the window, "for there he is, crossing the road, and just about to mount the steps; there is no mistaking his figure anywhere. I will not intrude upon you any longer, Mrs. Pickering, but will call upon you to-morrow morning, about this time, for your final decision; now adieu."

And Captain Cleethorpe took Mrs. Pickering's hand, bent over it, and disappeared.

From the window Madge saw the meeting between her late visitor and Mr. Drage. The latter had his back towards her, but Madge noticed him make an affirmative motion with his head as the captain pointed towards her house. Then she moved away, and shortly afterwards she heard the well-known, painfully slow foot-step, and hard hacking cough, echo on the staircase outside.

Then came a knock at the door, followed immediately by Mr. Drage's entrance. A tall, thin man, Mr. Drage, with high shoulders and narrow chest. What little

hair he had was light in colour, and brushed off his high forehead. His features were clear cut and regular, but his grey eyes were deep sunken in his head, his close-shaven cheeks were hollow and wan, and he endeavoured in vain to hide with his long lean hand the nervous twitching of his thin dry lips. He was dressed in severest clerical costume, all in black, and, in lieu of neckcloth or collar, wore a clear-starched muslin band round his throat. A fine head his, of the ascetic intellectual type, wanting but the tonsure and the cowl to complete its outward resemblance to one of those zealot monks, whom Domenichino loved to paint. And assuredly in no monk was ever to be found a greater combination of selflessness, humility, and zeal, than animated the sickly frame of Onesiphorus Drage!

A bright hectic spot rose on either cheek as Madge advanced to greet him. "I am so glad to see you back again, Mr. Drage," she said, giving him her hand; "you have been away a long time, but your health is much improved, I trust?"

"I am better, much better," said Mr. Drage, after a pause; "but those steps outside, and the steep bank, are a little trying to me. I have breath enough left, however, dear Mrs. Pickering, to thank you for the care you have taken of little Bertha during my absence, and the wonderful improvement you have effected in her."

They were seated by this time, she in the chair she had been occupying by the table in the window, he facing her at a little distance.

"Bertha is an apt pupil, and a very good child," said Madge, with some little constraint, as though the subject just introduced would probably lead to discussion which she was desirous of avoiding. "You arrived the night before last, Mr. Drage?"

"Yes, I fully intended calling on you yesterday, but I was a little overcome with fatigue after my journey; and, besides, I found a letter from Captain Cleethorpe awaiting me, a letter which affected you, and demanded a certain amount of deliberation on my part."

Rocks a-head showing themselves again, and now scarcely any chance of steering away from them!

"From Captain Cleethorpe?" repeated Madge; "oh, yes."

"In it Captain Cleethorpe informed me—addressing me, he was pleased to say, and rightly, as one who had a particular interest in your welfare—that he had just

submitted to you a proposition, which he thought it would be greatly for your advantage to accept. You follow me?" asked Mr. Drage, looking at her earnestly, and nervously passing his hand across his brow.

"Oh, yes," said Madge, "it is quite correct. I heard from Captain Cleethorpe some days since."

"Exactly," said Mr. Drage. "I did not quite understand the details of the proposed arrangement from Captain Cleethorpe's letter, and as it was an important matter to me"—the hectic spots flushed out on his cheek again, and he had to pause a moment before he continued—"as it was an important matter to me, I thought it better to see him and talk it out, before I came to you. Accordingly, I called upon him last night."

"Yes," said Madge, "so Captain Cleethorpe told me. He was here just now."

"Exactly. I met him outside. The proposition, as I understand it, Mrs. Pickering, is, that you should go as housekeeper to some friend of Captain Cleethorpe's—a retired officer, who is about to settle in this neighbourhood?"

"That is so."

"And you have promised to let Captain Cleethorpe know your final decision by to-night or to-morrow morning?"

"I have."

There was a pause for a few minutes, and then Mr. Drage said, with hesitating voice and strange manner:

"It was very good of Captain Cleethorpe to ask my opinion on this question. It has given me a little time to think, and—not that I know that the blow would have been less fatal if it had come upon me unawares. See," he said, rising to his feet, but bending over her as he leaned across the table at which she sat—"see," he said, speaking in a low tone, but very rapidly, "if you go from me, I die!"

Madge started, and looked up at him in affright. "You—you must not speak to me like that," she said.

"And why not," he continued, "when what I say to you is the truth? Ever since I have been away I have been pursued with this one same idea, the hope of making you my wife. I have striven against it, fought with it, but in vain. Each simple letter written by you, telling only of the child's doings and progress, has shown me how completely you were fitted to guide her in her future life, to cheer and comfort what remains to me of

mine. On every side I find, unsought, testimony to your goodness and your sweetness, in the affectionate regard with which all those with whom you are brought into contact openly speak of you. Mary, what I have to offer you is but little, indeed. My life, I know, is ebbing fast. Oh, that does not trouble me," he said, as she looked up, and involuntarily made a motion with her hand. "I have looked forward to my release for so long, that I do not know if, even with you for my companion, I should be glad of a reprieve. But I do know that the touch of your dear hand would nerve me better to bear what must be borne; the sound of your dear voice would soothe me in the anguish which is to be endured; the knowledge that I had left you as the legitimate protector of my child would comfort me when no other human comfort could avail. This is the only power of appeal I have; may I not make it to you now?"

"No, no! again I say no!"

"May I ask why?"

She paused a moment, and then said: "You know nothing of me, nor of my former life. Before I married I was—I was an actress."

He started back, and clutched the table tightly.

"An actress!" he repeated. "But you were good and virtuous, I am sure; you could not have been otherwise. Is there no other reason?"

"Yes," she said, very quietly, "there is. I will tell it you now, for after what you have said to me you deserve to know it, though when I lay on my death-bed, as you and I thought when you first knew me, I would never have suffered it to pass my lips. I am no widow, but a deserted wife. My husband is alive."

NEWS FROM THE CAMPS, 1778.

NINETY-THREE years ago, in the early summer time of 1778, there was a prodigious fuss in the English military world. The conduct of the war in America had given rise, in many quarters, to a vague, uneasy feeling that our army was not what it should be; that it was unsafe to rely, exclusively, upon the prestige of past successes—on the traditional glories of Minden and Quebec, of Belleisle, Louisburg, and the Havannah. Our officers were old-fashioned in their ideas, our soldiers wholly untrained in the duties of light troops, which were performed, as it were, instinc-

tively by their American opponents. Our tactics were slow and complicated compared with those of Prussia, which then, as now, was esteemed the model of military perfection. In the midst of these doubts and perplexities, arose the old wolf-cry of "the French are coming," and the spirit of the nation was thoroughly aroused. Additional regiments were raised; the militia was called out; large bodies of troops were ordered to be put under canvas in the southern and south-eastern districts; reviews and military displays were the order of the day. It has appeared to the writer of this paper that a few scraps of military intelligence—of "news from the camps"—selected from the public journals of this now forgotten time, might prove amusing and suggestive to readers of our own day.

It may be here observed that the practice of placing large bodies of troops in camps during the summer season, was more common in the early part of the seventeenth century than it has been of later years. Blackheath, and other open spaces around London, Barham Downs, near Canterbury, Shirley Common (Southampton), Salisbury Plain, and certain parts of the Isle of Wight, were the sites of large encampments during the reigns of the first and second Georges. Upon Coxheath, near Maidstone, lay twelve thousand men—guards, line, and artillery—of the Hanoverian army, during their brief sojourn in England, in the year 1756. At the same period, nine regiments and a train of artillery—in all nine thousand men—belonging to the army of the Electorate of Hesse-Cassel, were under canvas about a mile from Winchester, upon the left of the Basingstoke road. Large encampments of English line troops were also formed at Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, and at Chatham. But as the British arms triumphed abroad, these demonstrations at home became less frequent, and at the peace of 1763, they were discontinued altogether. Hence the summer camps of 1778 were as much objects of public curiosity as are the "autumn manœuvres" of to-day.

At the period of which we write—May, 1778—small encampments, of two to six regiments each, were formed, for the cavalry, at Bury St. Edmunds, Stowmarket, and Salisbury; and for the infantry—militia as well as regulars—at Chatham, Portsmouth, Winchester, and Plymouth. In addition to these, a corps of about fifteen thousand men, comprising a regiment of dragoons, six regiments of the line, fifteen of militia, and a train of artillery, under

command of a veteran officer, General Keppel, was encamped upon Coxheath, an open tract of country situated close to Maidstone, upon the right of the Faversham road, and commanding the road running through Ashford to the south coast; whilst another body of line and militia troops, numbering about nine thousand men, was posted on Warley Common, near Brentwood, in Essex, under command of a General Pierson. The movements of troops were comparatively slow in those days, and the ordinary channels of press intelligence few and restricted. It was some time before the camps were brought into working order, and longer still before intelligence was received from them with regularity by the London papers. At first, in the columns of the latter, we find only vague accounts of the severities of the duties and discipline in the camps—rumours of irregularities in which the rank and file were not the only culprits, of frequent desertions from the newly-formed militia corps, and of a good deal of corporal punishment. By degrees, affairs appear to have shaken down into better trim, and the accounts from the camps became more regular, and more specific in their details.

The following is a description of the encampment on Coxheath in the month of July, 1778.

The camp is situated to the south of, and nearly fronting, the village of Loose. It forms a straight line, upwards of three miles in length, and nearly half a mile in breadth. At the head of each regiment are two field-pieces, with three ammunition waggons. The head of each militia corps is also marked by a silken flag bearing the county arms. The sergeants' tents are in front of each regiment; the privates' in lines forming streets; and the officers' marquees in the centre. In each tent are two sergeants, or two corporals and two drummers, or five privates. They are supplied with good clean straw to lie on. In rear of each regiment is an earthen building for cooking purposes, and for stabling the artillery and sutlers' horses. In the distance are a number of dirt hovels for the soldiers' wives "to wash and lie in." Several inn and tavern-keepers have mess-huts for the officers close to the camp. Pickets are mounted night and day as in front of the enemy. There are two parades daily—morning and evening—and divine service for all the troops is performed in the open air on Sundays. Camp "shaves" appear to have abounded, the most common being

an approaching visit from the king, and a removal of the camp to the coast. There were frequent councils of war in the general's tent, consequent upon the arrivals of mounted expresses from London, which must have been sorely tantalising to "our correspondents," inasmuch as they are invariably obliged to confess their utter inability to discover what transpired on these occasions. We also learn that officers' working-parties, relieved weekly, were engaged in improving the roads between Coxheath and Chatham, and between Tilbury Fort and Warley, so as to bring the camps within two days' easy march of each other. Good beef and mutton were selling at Coxheath at fourpence per pound; bacon, sixpence; Cheshire cheese, fourpence; fresh butter, eightpence per pound; peas and beans at twopence per peck. There is no fresh water within a mile of the camp, so that all the water required for use is fetched in tin camp-kettles.

Respecting the Essex camp, we are told that the objections often urged against holiday-camps, to wit, that they are scenes of idleness and dissipation, are not applicable to Warley. The men rise at five A.M., and are often under arms until noon. When there is no evening parade, they are employed during the remainder of the day in clearing the common, hitherto a mass of almost impenetrable furze.

A correspondent sends an account of a trip to Warley. He describes the road from London as thronged with holiday-seekers, all of them, like true Londoners, displaying a keenly appreciative enjoyment of the combined delights of an outing and an anticipated military show. All the wayside inns were crowded with travellers, doing ample justice to the liberal supplies of cold provisions prepared for them. The proximity of the camp could be detected at a distance of several miles by the abundance of newly-washed linen lying out to dry, giving to the neighbouring country the appearance of a vast bleaching-field.

The camp, we are told, is situated upon a slope, and the prospect which it affords is delightful beyond description. It is laid out in three divisions, or separate camps, and between these and around the whole are huts for the soldiers' wives. These huts form streets, which are all named—Queen-street, Pye-corner, Glo'ster-lane, and the like. The number of public-houses is incredible; there cannot be less than one hundred and fifty of them. The soldiers' tents are ranged in rows, with

the officers' marquees in the centre. Each marquee is surrounded by a small ditch, about a foot deep, a few yards distant from the walls. The spaces between the walls of the marquees and the ditches are turned into little pleasure-gardens, with serpentine gravel-walks. On the borders of the camp are mud huts serving as coffee-houses, where the London papers are taken in. As much as a guinea a day is paid as rent for some of these huts. Hawkers cry beans, peas-pudding, hot pies, and the like, about the streets of the camp. Our correspondent was surprised to find the soldiers so well fed. He saw over three hundred of them in different parts of the camp, cooking good beef in gipsy fashion. But of all the curiosities on the common he considered the monstrous size of the ladies' head-dresses the greatest. He observed one lady who was unable to enter a tent. "How the devil should she?" gallantly quoth a gentleman standing by; "her head is as big as a marquee!"

Upon the whole, our correspondent thought that the camp was a sight "which could not but warm the heart of an Englishman who felt for the honour of his insulted country."

Amongst other items of Warley intelligence we find that the Twenty-fifth Foot is the smartest regiment in camp, but that the Liverpool Blues* are a very complete corps, considering the short time they have been formed.

Visitors to the camp are very numerous on Sundays. Upon one of these occasions there were over one hundred and seventy vehicles of different descriptions upon the ground at one time. Drafts of recruits arrive for the militia; the substitutes amongst them are receiving twelve to twenty guineas apiece. In proof that the militia service is not unpopular, we are told that the greater part of the men who have completed their militia engagements have voluntarily joined the regulars, upon condition of receiving their discharge therefrom at the expiration of three years. Jean Delafosse and his wife, camp sutlers, are committed to jail for seducing two soldiers of the Liverpool Blues to enter the service of the King of France. No fewer than four Jews are apprehended by the soldiers in one day, attempting to introduce counterfeit coin to the camp. As there is no

legal punishment for having such money on their persons only, the general orders the coin to be cut and defaced, and the possessors to be marched out of camp under escort, with the drums beating the Rogues' March.

The subaltern officers in the camps petition the king for an increase of their field allowance. His majesty expresses his desire to do all he can for them. "Some think the king can grant it by the exercise of the royal prerogative; others assert, and, indeed, 'tis more likely, that the assent of parliament will be needed."

In the month of September we learn that out of eight thousand four hundred and thirty-four men in camp, only eighty-four were in hospital. Since the formation of the camp, in May, six hundred cases—most of them from the militia—had been treated in hospital. Out of these there had been eighteen deaths.

Beef and mutton are selling at three-halfpence to threepence a pound—very prime bits at threepence a pound. Vegetables are proportionately cheap. This was in September.

From Coxheath we hear of an attempted improvement in old Brown Bess, which appears to have escaped the notice of military chroniclers. On Sunday, August the 25th, a general inspection of arms and accoutrements took place before divine service. The grenadiers and light infantry had just received new accoutrements, of the pattern issued to the newly-formed light companies of the militia. "The duty of the light infantry," we read, "being very heavy and fatiguing, and requiring the greatest alertness and expedition, which long arms often retard, has occasioned this exchange. The new arms are light and short, and peculiarly adapted for the men's case and the good of the service. They will do execution at a great distance." We also learn that each regiment of regulars in the camp has a target in front of its parade-ground, at which the soldiers practise with ball, morning and evening, small pecuniary rewards being given to the best shots.

On September the 4th there arrived in camp large quantities of hay, straw, and corn for the use of the cavalry, which had previously been reduced to one-eighth of their proper allowance. Our correspondent appears specially desirous to impress upon the public that "this arose from real scarcity, and not from any artifice on the part of the contractor or the commander-in-chief as has been reported."

* The Seventy-ninth Royal Liverpool Regiment of Foot, disbanded in 1784. The present Seventy-ninth—the gallant Cameron Highlanders—was not formed until 1793.

Then we hear of sundry field-days, at which the troops are under arms from five A.M. until noon, and fire twenty to thirty rounds of blank ammunition per man. Many "new and grand" manoeuvres are performed on these occasions, including the storming and defence of a fascine-battery thrown up by the train of artillery. Some foreigners are arrested in camp and committed to Maidstone Jail, on suspicion of being French spies. The Custom House authorities make a seizure of about four hundred pounds' worth of "run" goods, in a sutler's hut in camp. A soldier of the artillery train receives five hundred lashes for "robbing Farmer Johnson's hen-roost." We have also occasional intelligence of men undergoing one hundred or one hundred and fifty lashes for drunkenness on duty; but it is observable that corporal punishment would seem to have been much less frequently inflicted than is consonant with popular ideas respecting this period of our military history, and that complaints against the soldiers by the farmers and country people were rare. About this time a couple of events appear to have given ample employment to the gossips in camp. One of these was a duel between two officers of foot, in which one of them was desperately wounded. The officers, together with their seconds and two officers' servants concerned in the affair, are all to be tried by general court-martial, we are told, and 'tis thought they will be dismissed the king's service." The other event was the trial for desertion of one Bryan Sheridan and three other soldiers—two of them corporals. Sheridan was sentenced to be shot, and the three others to receive "one thousand lashes apiece with the cat-o'-nine-tails on their bare backs." The latter underwent a part of their punishment immediately, and were then removed to hospital until the doctors should certify their fitness to receive another instalment. Sheridan was given a week to prepare himself for death, and the chaplain of his regiment was ordered to attend him three times a day, or oftener should he desire it. September the 21st was the date fixed for carrying into execution the sentence of death. At an early hour on that day, the dragoons and two battalions of infantry, made up of the pickets of all the regiments of foot in camp, paraded in front of a small wood in the vicinity—probably that now bearing the appropriate name of Fright Wood on the county maps. A procession composed as follows: Ten pioneers, a field-officer, a company of grena-

diers, the provost-marshal on horseback, a chaplain on horseback, the prisoner, a firing-party of six men, a cart to carry off the body, with the prisoner's regiment bringing up the rear: quitted the camp, marched down the parade, and halted opposite the centre. The prisoner was placed upon his knees, with his back to the wood, a white cap was drawn over his face, and he continued some short time in prayer with the chaplain.

While the prisoner was thus engaged, General Keppel arrived on the ground, and announced a reprieve in the following words: "Private Bryan Sheridan, of the —th Regiment of Foot, having been convicted by a general court-martial of the crime of desertion, has been sentenced to be shot to death; but his majesty has been graciously pleased to pardon him, upon condition that he transport himself, as soon as possible, to Senegal, there to serve his majesty for the remainder of his life." The prisoner, who had behaved with great fortitude, immediately fell down on his knees, and returned thanks. He was then handed over to the provost-marshal, and the troops marched back to camp. "The whole scene was awful, yet pleasing," our correspondent says, and he hopes that "the procession will have a good effect upon the troops."

In another letter we learn that "the general hospital for the camp (Coxheath) is nearly a mile from Maidstone, and upon the left of the main road. It is replete with every happy convenience for the purpose, good water, a large garden, and a commodious bath for men whose disorders require the practice of bathing. The hospital is attended by two eminent physicians, two house-surgeons, apothecaries, &c. A proper supply of matrons, nurses, and other attendants, is likewise provided. The former, the matrons, are supplied chiefly from the wives of the sergeants; the latter from those of the private men. These women, whose whole lives probably have been spent in camp, and whose husbands are now there, must have a peculiar tenderness for the sick soldier, and are the properest nurses the general could have selected."

The next piece of intelligence shows that the delinquencies of the milkman were not quite unknown ninety years ago. "It having been reported to General Keppel that the milk supplied by the contractor to the hospital was not only bad, but actually detrimental to the recovery of the patients,

the general at once directed that a number of the best milch cows should be purchased, and pasturage taken for them near the hospital garden. He then sent for the contractor, and dissolved the contract." On another occasion the general threatens to make "a publick example" of the contractor if the offence of supplying bad bread to the troops be repeated. Complaints of the badness of the bread would appear to have been common in all the camps, although wheat was selling in London market at thirty-six shillings to forty-two shillings the quarter, all through the summer.

In September the king and queen reviewed the troops—six regiments of militia—in Winchester camp. The scene is quaintly described by a correspondent as "heavenly;" "the militia were all in their new cloaths, and over seventy thousand loyal spectators on the ground." The royal party travelled in chaises and four, accompanied by an extensive retinue of beefeaters, gentlemen-at-arms (or gentlemen pensioners, as they were then called), and the like, and escorted by a troop of Horse Grenadier Guards. How the beefeaters and pensioners were conveyed, we know not; but it would seem that the royal baggage-train was not cumbersome, for Mrs. Harris assures us, in one of her lively letters, that on the occasion of the Winchester visit the queen had only two maids with her, and that the trio, to wit, her majesty and the two abigails, had but one trunk between them, although the absence of the party from home extended over a week. Earlier in the month a similar progress had been made to Warley, where there was a grand sham fight. The king afterwards held a levee in the open air, at the foot of the royal standard, in the midst of a square of Horse Grenadiers.

The royal visit to Coxheath did not take place until November the 3rd. The royal party arrived in the afternoon, and the review immediately commenced in the presence, our correspondent writes in italics, "of thirty thousand affectionate and loyal subjects." The king, in his royal regimentals, mounted upon a magnificent roan charger, richly ornamented with purple and orange-coloured ribbons, rode bare-headed down the line, followed by the queen, in her royal regimentals—a scarlet pelisse, faced with blue, and a black hat turned up with a plume of feathers, and an immense black cockade—in a chaise and four, escorted by the Horse Grenadiers, and,

as no allusion is made to keeping the ground, accompanied, we presume, by the affectionate and loyal subjects aforesaid. On arriving at the left of the first line, the king put on his hat, and the cortège wheeled to the left, and proceeded along the front of the second line, and afterwards up the front of a third composed of grenadier and light infantry companies only. The royal party then returned to the front, and the troops "exhibited many excellent manœuvres, which gave great satisfaction to the king." At three-thirty p.m. his majesty signified his intention of quitting the field. The troops accordingly formed up, and fired a feu-de-joie, which concluded the proceedings. The king afterwards held a levee in camp, and the royal party proceeded to Leeds Castle to spend the night, the state of the season rendering it undesirable for them to sleep in camp.

Shortly afterwards all the camps were broken up, and the troops went into winter quarters.

At Coxheath, with a force varying, at different periods, from twelve thousand to fifteen thousand men, there had been, we are told, from the middle of May to the 1st of November, eighteen hundred and three admissions to hospital. Of these, fourteen hundred and ninety-six had been discharged cured, thirty-eight had died, and twenty-nine deserted. There remained two hundred and forty patients, all of whom, it was expected, would soon be fit for duty.

LOVE-MAKING IN THE TROPICS.

I AM in love. The object of my affection is a creole beauty, who lives in the heart of sunny Cuba. She has the blackest of bright eyes, a profusion of dark, frizzled hair, with eyebrows and lashes to match. It is universally admitted that the complexion of my innamorata is fair for a daughter of the tropics, but truth compels me to state that in one sense Cachita is not so white as she is painted. During the day she plasters her delicate skin with cascarilla: a chalky composition of powdered egg-shell and rum. This she applies without the least regard for effect, after the manner of other Cuban ladies, who have a theory that whitewash is a protection against the sun, and a check to unbecoming perspiration. Towards the cool of the evening, however, my Cachita divests herself of her calcareous mask, and appears in all her native bloom.

We meet, according to custom, at a window of Cachita's parental residence, which is admirably adapted for purposes of wooing, being wide, lofty, and within easy reach from the street. Cuban windows are guiltless of glass, but anything like elopement from within, or burglary from without, is effectually provided against by means of strong iron bars, placed wide enough apart, however, to admit the arm and shoulder of a Pyramus on the pavement, or the yielding face of a Thisbe on the other side. An open engagement in Cuba has many disadvantages which an open-air engagement has not. Seated in an uncongenial arm-chair, the conventional lover may enjoy the society of his betrothed any hour of the day or evening, but he may not meet her by gaslight alone, nor may he exhibit his passion in a demonstrative manner, save in the presence of others. Warned by these objections, Cachita and I have agreed to keep our own counsel, and court in this *al fresco* way. Besides, it is the Cuban custom for a lady to sit before her window, in the cool of the evening, and converse with a passing acquaintance, without infringing the rules of propriety.

Cachita's parents are in the *comedor* taking their early supper of thick chocolate and new milk rolls. Doña Belen is a corpulent lady, with a couple of last century side-curls, and a round, good-natured face. Don Severiano is a wealthy sugar planter, and a short, shrivelled old gentleman, with a sallow countenance, closely shaved like a priest's, and a collar and cravat of the latest fashion. These worthy people are at present ignorant of their daughter's attachment, and we have agreed not to enlighten them, because their opinions respecting matrimony differ. Doña Belen is easily won if a suitor to her daughter's hand can prove his genuine white origin, while Don Severiano has an extreme partiality for gentlemen with coffee plantations, sugar estates, or tobacco farms.

The Spanish language is an agreeable medium for expressing the tender passion; creole Spanish is even more suited to such a purpose, being full of endearing epithets and affectionate diminutives. I am not obliged to address my lover by her simple name of Caridad; I may call her Caridadita, Cachita, Cachona, Concha, or Conchita, and be perfectly grammatical, and at the same time fond. The same romantic language enables me to use such pretty epithets as "Mi mulatica" (my little mulatto girl), "Mi Chinita" (my little

Chinawoman), "Mi negrita" (my pretty negress), "Hija de mi alma!" (child of my soul). Our conversation is carried on in epigrammatic phrases. I need not waste words by making the long-winded inquiry, "Do you love me?" It is sufficient to ask simply, "Me quieres?" And when Cachita tells me, in reply, that her love for me may be compared to her fondness for her mother's precious bones (*Te quiero mas que á los huesitos de mi mamá*), I appreciate the statement, though I know it is only a figure of speech peculiar to her countrywomen.

"Mi corazoncito," says Cachita, fondly, "I fear that your visits here must be suspended for the present."

"Why so, mi vida?"

"Papacito (Don Severiano) suspects something. His friend, Señor Catasus, who passes here every evening, has seen us converse at the window more frequently than custom allows, and he has mentioned it to papacito."

Old Catasus has a son whom Don Severiano employs, and I fancy that his interest in Cachita's welfare is not purely disinterested.

"Young Amador is a frequent visitor at your father's house?"

"He comes with others in the evening sometimes."

"He danced three times with you at the Piñata ball, and he walks with you on Sunday evenings in the Plaza de Armas, where the military band plays."

"You are not jealous?"

"N—no; I am only afraid lest young Amador admires you too much."

"What of that?"

"Don Catasus has a large coffee plantation, and you know what a partiality your father has for sons of wealthy planters."

"Are you angry?"

"No, I am not angry, mi tojosita."

"Me quieres mucho?"

"Muchísimo, pichona mia. Demo un beso."

"Before giving you one, you must promise two things."

"What are they?"

"That you will not be jealous, and that you will go no more to the Pica-pica balls."

"I have been only once this season, mi vidita."

"My black maid Gumersinda was there, and she says that you danced all night with the mulattoes."

"I was practising the difficult step of La Danza Criolla."

"It is danced very improperly by the coloured people at the Pica-pica."

"Many of my white acquaintances go to these balls, and I am only following their custom and that of the country."

"Promise not to go again this season."

"I promise; so deme un beso."

Cachita inserts her soft face between the obliging bars of the huge window, and as nobody is passing at that moment, I take an affectionate leave of my "Piedra."

My interviews with Cachita at her window become rare on account of Don Severiano's suspicions, and as Cuban ladies of all ages never leave their homes to visit their next-door neighbour without a trusty escort, I have no other opportunity for an uninterrupted tête-à-tête. Occasionally I meet my lover at early mass in one of the churches, or at the musical promenade in the public square, but on these occasions she is always accompanied by a friend or a relative, and a couple of black attendants.

On the approach of Cachita's saint's day, Santa Caridad, I favour my divinity with a little midnight music. Those of my friends whose lovers are called Caridad, join me in hiring a few musicians and a couple of vocalists. When our minstrels have performed their first melody, the sereno, or night-watchman, appears, and demands to see our serenade license, because, out of the carnival season, no serenading is allowed without a special permit from the authorities. After duly exhibiting our license the music proceeds, and when a song, composed expressly for the lady we are serenading, has been sung, and a few more danzas have been played, a shutter of the grated window is seen to open, a white hand with a white handkerchief flutters approvingly between the iron bars, and a significant flower is offered for the acceptance of him whom it may most concern.

In the carnival season, and on certain fiestas, I visit my Caridad, in company with a dozen Pollo-friends (as the youth of Cuba are called), and we bring with us a full band of black musicians, bearing ordinary stringed instruments. Our visit is paid in broad daylight, but we are masked, and so disguised that paterfamilias cannot recognise his guests; he is, however, satisfied as regards our respectability, when one of our party privately reveals his name. At the inspiring tones of La Danza some lady neighbours flock to the scene, and follow us and our swarthy instrumentalists into our host's reception-room, which is entered direct from the

street by a huge door. Then a dance is extemporised. The fascinating step of La Danza Criolla lends itself to a little secret love-making, and with a partner like the graceful Cachita (to whom alone I disclose myself when my turn comes to visit her house), I feel in the seventh heaven! But dancing at twelve o'clock in the day, with a tropical sun blazing in at the windows and open doors, and a room full of excited dancers, merits some more substantial reward, and in the pauses of the danza our hospitable host invites us into his spacious comedor, where refreshments in the shape of champagne, English bottled ale, café noir, and dulces, are lavishly dispensed.

Report, which in Cuba travels like a tornado, and distorts like a convex mirror, poisons the mind of Cachita's parent, Don Severiano, and one sultry afternoon Cachita's black maid, Gumersinda, brings me a billet-doux from her young mistress, which fills me with alarm. Don Severiano knows all—more than all—and has resolved to separate us by removing Cachita to one of his sugar estates, eight leagues from town. For some weeks I hear nothing of my lover's whereabouts, but at last one of Don Severiano's black mule-drivers halts before my door. He tells me that Cachita and her family are staying at La Intimidación, a sugar estate; and after searching among his mule's complicated trappings, he produces a missive from his young mistress. Absence has affected Cachita, as it affects other ladies in love, and my fair creole expresses a desire to see me. Don Severiano will be leaving the estate for town on a certain day, and, if I am willing, a meeting may easily be effected. Saturnino, the mule-driver, who is in the secret, undertakes to guide me to the trysting-place. I accordingly obtain a fast-trotting steed, and follow him through the intricate country, which, after many hours' riding, brings us to the neighbourhood of La Intimidación. There my guide conducts me to a tumble-down negro hut, kept by a decrepit negress, and situated in the midst of a very paradise of banana-trees, plantains, palms, and gigantic ferns. The fare which my hostess provides consists of native fruits and vegetables, cooked in a variety of ways, together with bacalao (dried codfish), and tasajito, or salted meat, dried in the sun. After my fatiguing pilgrimage I refresh myself with a cigarette and a cup of well-made café negro; I bathe in spring water diluted with aguardiente rum, and exchange my soiled clothes of white drill for a fresh suit of the same

material. Towards the cool of the evening, as I sit smoking a long damp cigar before the door of my rustic habitation, the flapping of huge plantain-leaves, and the clatter of horses' hoofs, announce the approach of my charmer, who, escorted by the faithful Gumersinda, has come to visit me in my homely retreat. I assist Cachita in alighting from her steed, and in due course we are seated beneath the shade of an overhanging mango-tree, whose symmetrical leaves reach to the ground, and completely conceal us. We are disturbed by no other sounds than the singing of birds, the creaking of hollow bamboos, and the rippling of water. Under these pleasant circumstances we converse and make love to our hearts' content. The cautious Gumersinda warns us when the hour for separation arrives, and then we reluctantly part. Our agreeable tête-à-tête is repeated on the following day, but as Don Severiano is expected to return the day after, this is our last interview.

On my road back to town, whom should I meet, at a wayside tienda, but Cachita's formidable parent, together with his friend Señor Catasus, and my rival, the young Amador! Don Severiano is furious. High words pass between us, there is a scene, and I leave the cane-field proprietor swearing to punish everybody concerned in his daughter's secret engagement.

Some days after my return to town I learn that the black maid Gumersinda, and the mule-driver Saturnino, have suffered the penalty of slave law at the hands of their owner, who has sentenced them both to a severe flogging. Through the medium of a friend I receive a note from Cachita, to inform me that her father is determined to break off my engagement with his daughter by a more effectual separation than that which has been already attempted. "If you love me," the note concludes, "have me deposited without delay."

To deposit a young lady in Cuba is to have her legally transferred to the house of a trustworthy relative, or a respectable family. A legal document for her arrest is presented at the parental house, and if the young lady be of age, and willing to sign her assent, no opposition on the part of her parents will avail. If, at the expiration of the prescribed period, no reason is shown why the deposited damsel should not follow her own inclinations, the lover may release his precious pledge by marrying her at once.

In accordance with Cachita's desire I consult the nearest lawyer, from whom I

obtain a formal document, empowering me to deposit Cachita as soon as she shall have arrived at her town residence. I await the latter event with impatience, but days elapse, and the shutters of Don Severiano's habitation remain closed. I am soon relieved from my anxiety, but horrified to learn that Cachita has been removed from the sugar estate, and consigned to the tender care of nuns in the town convent. As my legal powers cannot penetrate that sanctum, I am compelled to await the natural course of events. Cachita is destined to pass six long months within the convent walls, during which time Don Severiano confidently hopes that solitary confinement and holy teaching will have a beneficial effect upon Cachita's mind. Should this prove otherwise, the period for her incarceration will be prolonged, until the fire of her young affections shall have been completely quenched.

IN A STRANGE COUNTRY.

At gloaming hour to a tower I rode
In a strange country;
A maiden fair from a proud abode
Looked out on me.

I stood and look'd in her dreamy eyes,
Her eyes sank down:
Dark and blue grew the silent skies
Over the town.

She shone at the window of her bower
In her golden hair,
I loved her then, it was love's own hour,
And she looked so fair!

To my cithern sweet, under the moon,
Full low sang I,
And the maid leant out to drink the dew
With a gentle sigh.

Dark and damp was the sky that night
As I sang my love;
She reached me out her hand so white
From her bower above.

In her lily hand I set a rose
With a kiss so wild.
I saw the casement slowly close
While she stood and smiled.

Three days and nights to the self-same place
In the strange country,
I wander'd and look'd for the maiden's face,
But no more came she.

The third day when I thither came
In the sunset light,
The sun through the casement cast its flame
Upon something white.

Then my heart leap'd up, and my cithern play'd
For happiness,
But ah! 'twas not my lily-white maid,
But a long cold dress.

Three days and nights to the self-same place
In the strange country,
I wander'd and look'd for the maiden's face,
But no more came she.

The third night when I thither came,
On the same sad track,
The lamp in the doorway cast its flame
Upon something black.

I drew my cloak across my face,
 And my soul sank down,
 They bore a coffin from the place
 With a maiden crown.

I followed behind, with brain half mad,
 The men that bare;
 To a church they carried the coffin sad,
 And left it there.

I stood in the shadow of a tomb
 With hooded head,
 And I saw through the painted window's gloom
 The moon blood red.

Then towards the coffin I stole, with face
 All pale and white,
 When something turned in the chilly place,
 In the dead still night.

And I saw a youth by the coffin stand,
 As white as snow,
 He held the virgin wreath in his hand,
 And a dagger also.

"I have slain thee, faithless maid and fair!"
 I heard him cry;
 "To-morrow thy lover strange, I swear,
 Shall also die."

Then at his throat did I wildly leap,
 Like one possessed,
 And I plunged his own red poniard deep
 Into his breast.

And I dragged him forth from the holy sanc
 All cold and dead,
 But I placed the white, white wreath again
 At the coffin head.

Black, deep black was the bitter night
 As night could be,
 But the cock crew shrill as I took my flight
 From that strange country.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE SACHEVERELL RIOTS.

ON the 5th of November, 1709 (eighth year of Queen Anne), Doctor Henry Sacheverell, a rash and hot-headed High Church clergyman, preached a sermon at St. Paul's, before the lord mayor and aldermen, inflammatory enough to have set their scarlet gowns in a blaze, as it very soon did all the Whigs of London. The doctor's subject was the "Perils of false brethren both in Church and State," and the doctrine he upheld was Non-Resistance, a dogma which at once threw the late King William and all his adherents into the category of common rebels.

This mischievous firebrand was the son of a quiet rector of Marlborough, in Wiltshire, who on his death had left a large family in very humble circumstances. Henry had been adopted by his godfather, a Wiltshire apothecary, who had sent him to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he was a chamber-fellow of Addison, and where in 1687, at the age of fifteen, Henry became a demy. As fellow and public tutor at Oxford, Sacheverell seems to have been in his proper element, and he wrote Latin verses, "coached," and taft-hunted with diligence

and self-complacency. In due time he became rector of Cannock, in Staffordshire, and in 1705 he launched into a larger world by being appointed preacher at St. Saviour's, Southwark. His rash zeal soon led him to gird at Godolphin, and to denounce the Dissenters. He was instantly pounced upon as a typical exponent of the opinions of the extreme High Church party, and was impeached before the House of Lords for high crimes and misdemeanours, on February the 27th, 1710. The most treasonable portions of his worthless, ungrammatical sermon were the following. As to Non-Resistance, the noisy doctor said:

"The grand security of our government, and the very pillar upon which it stands, is founded upon the steady belief of the subject's obligation to an absolute and unconditional obedience to the supreme power in all things lawful, *and the utter illegality of resistance upon any pretence whatsoever.* But this fundamental doctrine, notwithstanding its divine sanction in the express command of God in Scripture, and without which it is impossible any government of any kind or denomination in the world should subsist with safety, and which has been so long the honourable and distinguishing characteristic of our Church, is now, it seems, quite exploded and ridiculed out of countenance as an unfashionable, superannuated, nay (which is more wonderful), as a dangerous tenet, utterly inconsistent with the right, liberty, and property of the people, who as our new preachers and new politicians teach us (I suppose by a new and unheard-of gospel as well as laws), have, in contradiction to both, the power invested in them to cancel their allegiance at pleasure, and call their sovereign to account for high treason against his supreme subjects, forsooth—nay, to dethrone and murder him as a criminal, as they did the royal martyr, by a justiciary sentence; and, what is most incredible, some presume to make their court to their prince by maintaining such anti-monarchical principles. But, God be thanked, neither the constitution of our Church or State is so far altered but that by the laws of both (still in force, and which I hope for ever will be), these damnable positions, let them come either from Rome or Geneva, from the pulpit or the press, are condemned for rebellion and high treason. Our adversaries think they effectually stop our mouths, and have us sure and unanswerable on this point, when they urge the revolution of this day in their defence. But certainly they are the greatest enemies of

that and his late majesty, and the most ungrateful for their deliverance, who endeavour to cast such black and odious colours upon us both. How often must they be told that the king himself solemnly disclaimed the least imputation of resistance in his declaration, and that the parliament ordained that they set the crown upon his head upon no other title but that of the vacancy of the throne. And did they not unanimously condemn to the flames, as it justly deserved, that infamous libel that would have pleaded the right of conquest by which resistance was suppressed? so tender were they of the legal right, and so averse to infringe the least tittle of our constitution. We see how ready these incendiaries are to take the least umbrage, to charge their own cursed tenets on the Church of England, to divert their guilt upon it, and quit scores with it for their iniquity. Thus do they endeavour to draw comparisons and to justify the horrid actions and principles of 'forty-one, which have been of late years, to the scandal of our Church and nation, publicly defended." In a subsequent portion of his sermon, Sacheverell lashed out fiercely at the Dissenters, denouncing them as those "clamorous, insatiable, and Church-scorning malignants" whom no grants nor indulgences but complete surrender could win over. "Miscreants begot in rebellion, born in sedition, and nursed up in faction." "Why," shouted the doctor, "do they pelt the Church with more blasphemous libels and scurrilous lampoons than were ever published in Oliver's usurpation? Have they not lately villanously divided us with knavish distinctions of High and Low Churchmen? Are not the best characters they can give us those of Papists, Jacobites, and conspirators? And what do they mean by all this insidious cant, but by false insinuations, and raising groundless jealousies and fears, to embroil the public and to bring it into that confusion they are suggesting upon us? Whether these men are not contriving and plotting our utter ruin, and whether all those false brethren that fall in with these measures and designs do not contribute basely to it, I leave every impartial man that wishes the welfare of our constitution to determine."

The debates during this man's trial were very hot. The question was simply whether all the Whig lords were rebels or not, whether King William, of "glorious memory," was not a usurper, and the subsequent Protestant succession illegal and invalid. Jekyll and Walpole spoke strongly,

as did Major-General Stanhope. Lord Coningsby denounced the sermon and the counsel defending Sacheverell. Bishop Burnet, a strenuous and able Whig partisan, spoke learnedly on this occasion against absolute power and the so-called divine right of kings. He quoted Trajan's motto on the sword he delivered to the governor of a province. "Pro me, si merear, in me" (for me, but if I deserve it against me). He spoke angrily of those who asserted that Queen Anne secretly favoured the enemies of the Protestant succession (which she undoubtedly did); he talked of the times when the High Church clergy used to meet at coffee-houses on a Saturday to read the Rehearsal, a paper that denied the queen's right to the crown; he concluded by saying that "condemning resistance in such crude and general terms is certainly condemning the revolution;" and he reminded the Lords of the Act by which, in case our princes turn Papists, or marry Papists, the subjects are in express words discharged from their allegiance to them. Both Houses were at fever heat during the whole trial, which lasted nearly a month. There was on one occasion almost a fracas. When the Speaker and Sir Richard Onslow went up with the Commons to demand judgment against Doctor Henry Sacheverell, as the Mace was entering the House of Lords before the Speaker, Black Rod endeavoured to stop him by putting the sable wand across the door, on which the Speaker said, "If you do not immediately take away the black rod I will return to the House of Commons." The same thing happened in going to the bar, and again when the turbulent Black Rod wanted to place the prisoner on the right hand of the Speaker. Eventually the mischievous partisan was suspended from preaching for three years, and his two sermons (at St. Paul's and at Derby) were ordered to be burnt by the hands of the common hangman before the Royal Exchange, in the presence of the lord mayor and sheriffs.

It was during this memorable trial that the famous Sacheverell riots were organised by the more violent of the Tories. The object was to glorify the doctor, and vex and injure the unoffending Dissenters.

On the second day of the Sacheverell trial the High Churchmen, Tories, and Jacobites, were already in a fermentation. Their great doctrine of non-resistance to royalty, however tyrannical, was in danger. Secret money was scattered among the mob-leaders, and a riot against the Dis-

senters at once organised. - The crowd that brought Doctor Sacheverell from Westminster Hall to the Temple, on the 28th of February, openly discussed who should be their leaders, and swore loud Tory oaths that the next night they would pull down Doctor Burgess's meeting-house in Carey-street. Some of the thousands of angry partisans assembled were for falling to the work at once, but others were for waiting till the trial of the doctor was finished. Eventually, with many threats, they dispersed, after breaking the windows of Doctor Burgess's meeting-house and private dwelling. The thunder-cloud had melted into a little harmless shower. There was great talk about the affair in the dissenting coffee-houses, and complaints made to the Secretary of State, but nothing more happened that night. The next evening the storm broke. About ten o'clock the mob began to cluster round Mr. Bradbury's meeting-house in Fetter-lane, and very soon that narrow gorge between gable-ended houses was brimful from Fleet-street to Holborn. The mob was outrageous, the constables were jostled and insulted. One drive at the door of the meeting-house up the passage on the west side, it gave way, and the sack began. Down went the pews, rip went the blinds, clash went the windows, the pulpit was beaten in, the gallery stove, the hymn-books were torn to scraps; while a footman, conspicuous in blue livery, hoisted a dusty window-curtain on a long pole, and shouted, "A High Church standard." About one hundred and fifty men were engaged in this work of destruction, and the rioters carried out the boards, the broken wood, and the clock, and lit up a flaming bonfire in Holborn. Almost at the same time another meeting-house was torn down in Leather-lane, and a third (Mr. Taylor's) in Hatton-garden. The mob then made several bonfires in Hatton-garden, and one in Holborn, opposite Leather-lane, and by the time those flames reddened the sky, fresh fires westward replied to the glare.

Captain Orrell, a quiet Whig gentleman present, said to one of the frightened constables near Fetter-lane, who was watching the rioters bringing wood to the bonfire:

"This is a great riot. I am sorry that you cannot put a stop to it."

The man, pale with fright, replied:

"There is such a mob we cannot suppress it; but there is a footman I see there I know very well. I know whose man he is."

The footman aforementioned turned out after-

wards to be the servant of a Madame Miles, who lived in Greville-street, Brooke's Market, and who going to bed about half-past ten, and observing a great glare of fire, had sent out her man to see what was the matter. This footman, carrying the High Church standard, and heading the mob, stopped several coaches in Holborn, collected money for the cause, and made those inside the vehicles, though almost frightened out of their lives, shout "High Church!" By this time part of the mob had swept down Chancery-lane, and, joined by crowds from Broad-court and the alleys round Clement's Inn and Clare Market, filled Carey-street. The rioters soon broke into Mr. Burgess's meeting-house, and began to sack it. Twenty or thirty well-dressed men, who seemed ringleaders, broke up the pews, while others tore up the flooring, cursing all bystanders who did not help; one zealous man devoting himself solely to the destruction of the pulpit. Conspicuous among the crowd appeared a waterman in a short scarlet coat and shining badge, a little fellow with clipped black hair, who carried the brass scone from the meeting-house three times round a bonfire in Lincoln's-inn-fields, and shouting, "Huzza, Sacheverell!" threw it into the flames. Other fragments of the wreck of the meeting-house, such as a bedstead and the street-door, were also carried in procession round the burning heap. To every one who passed the fire, whether mere spectators, sympathisers, or tradesmen from Holborn or Turnstile come to look for their truant apprentices, the mob shouted, "Who are you for? What are you for?" "Huzza for Sacheverell and High Church!" If the man was a surly Whig, a concealed Papist, or a hater of rioters in general, they rapped him over the back with their cudgels till he learned to pull off his cocked-hat and shout the Tory war-cry with them. Just as a footman had been the chief man at the Holborn fires, so was the little waterman in Lincoln's-inn-fields. There was also a second waterman in the crowd with the queen's badge on his arm. He was drunk, and the mob seized him in Duke-street. They closed him in with a ring, "as for cudgel-players," pushed him to and fro, said he should be their captain, and hallooed and saluted him as their leader, while some of them cried:

"You are a queen's waterman, you shall go with us, or we'll tear you in pieces."

The stammering, frightened fellow, who had been out all day drinking with the beadles of Blue Coat Hospital, whom he

had visited about an apprentice he wanted, replied humbly:

"God bless the queen, gentlemen! I will do anything you would have me, only do not knock me on the head."

Captain Orrell, the quiet man, who had now come up, ventured to say to some of the shouting rascals, carrying wood from the ruins in Carey-street to the Lincoln's-inn-fields bonfire:

"Gentlemen, what are you doing? The Guards are coming."

But the rioters, tossing their wigs wildly into the air, replied:

"D—n the Guards and the parliament too! we are ready to face them all."

The mob presently beginning to inquire, "Where is the fellow that said the Guards were coming?" the peaceable Orrell, who had come over from Southwark in his night-gown and great-coat hastily thrown over, thought it high time to slip away. The mob, weary of burning pews, benches, and pulpits, were by this time eager for fresh spoil, if not for blood. Furious wretches, heated with the riot, waved their clubs, tossed up their wigs, and began to shout, "Which is Lord Wharton's house?" "To St. James's!" Others, "No, no! to the City! the City! the Bank!" (this last sort of proposal is sure to crop up pretty soon in any city riot); while the mob roared like madmen as they were, "D—n them we'll have 'em all down, all the meeting-houses down." A party of the mob breaking away from the rest, ran in a straggling line across the fields (there were no gardens then), led by a tall man. In the middle of the fields they grew to a larger mass, then split again into two parties. Some spread toward the arch in Duke-street, but more rushed toward Powis House, at the north-west corner. There the queen's waterman, conspicuous with his badge, held a council of the cudgel-men.

"We will have them all down," he cried.

"Where shall we go to now," some cried; "Drury-lane, or Wild-street?"

The waterman said, "Curse it, the Wild-street one is a hen-roost, the other is worth ten of it. I'll lead you on, boys. Huzza! To Drury-lane! High Church and Sacheverell."

The waterman and his troop then rushed shouting down under the piazzas of Powis House into Queen-street. The waterman halted every now and then, crying to his followers, "Huzza! High Church and Sacheverell! We'll have all the meeting-houses down to-night; follow me; why don't you come along!" Fast the deluge of yell-

ing madmen rolled on towards the narrow and foul streets of Drury-lane, which vomited forth their minor streams to swell the great torrent of cudgel-men eager to burn the Dissenters' pulpits and pews. They could not at first hit upon the chapel-door, and ran here and there like bloodhounds off the scent, beating first at these shutters, then at those. At last they found out the quiet, silent, demure-looking house, upon which a little nimble fellow from the mob ran up with a pickaxe to break open the entrance. A woman that belonged to the place, on seeing that, ran out with her arms thrown up and cried, "My sister's in the house, she'll be killed!" Orrell, who had again turned up, said, "Do not be afraid, mistress, I will endeavour to pacify them if I can." Then a second man came up with a hatchet and struck twice through the planks of the door, shouting, "You don't know how to break down a meeting-house door." The quiet Orrell was soon assaulted by a soldier in a looped waistcoat and white stockings, because he begged him not to destroy the poor woman's room, which had only an old bedstead in it. "Curse you," cried the soldier, "are you against Sacheverell? The Church! the Church for ever—we will go up!" The mob then went up. The room proved to be the minister's room, and the mob destroyed all his notes and papers, threw the clock and the pulpit-cushions into the kennel, and beat in the galleries. The quiet man asking where the waterman was who had been so active, some one said he had gone to St. James's. Another swore he was off to Lord Wharton's, a third, that he was breaking open the back-door of the chapel. Orrell presently went over to the Griffin and Parrot, at the end of Queen-street, and expressed his sorrow at what the mob had done. He and a friend then went to Wild-street to see the ruins of the chapel, and at the arch met a detachment of the Guards clinking along at full speed. Orrell held out his hand to the captain, and cried, "This is the best way, through Wild-street." Another troop of Guards went round another way.

The Horse Grenadier Guards were soon at the scene of riot. It was about half-past eleven. When in Drury-lane, the Horse Grenadiers were ordered to return their bayonets and draw their swords, and, as they drew up in a line by the bonfire, a bailiff's man, named Purchase, drew his sword and fronted the soldiers, screaming "Sacheverell! Sacheverell!" Some of the soldiers in the third troop of Guards at

once recognised the man as having served with them in Flanders. Orrell, seeing the rash fool's danger, for the bailiff had been all the morning drinking from brandy-shop to brandy-shop, went up to him as he stood screaming out oaths and threats, near the central kennel, at the end of Long-acre, in Drury-lane, fronting the half-laughing, half-angry soldiers. Laying hands on his chest, thinking he was some foolish Tory country gentleman, half drunk from some Covent Garden club, Orrell pushed Purchase back.

"Do you know what you do, man?" said Orrell; "do you know what you do in opposing the Guards? You oppose the queen's person."

The tipsy bailiff, rapping out a big oath, cried, "Are you against Sacheverell? I'm for High Church and Sacheverell! I will lose my life in the cause—I will fight the best of them."

Then Purchase stepped forward to the mob, huzzaed and shouted, "Boys, I will lead you on for High Church and Sacheverell!"

Orrell again pushed him, but two foot-soldiers came up and said, "What do you do? He is drunk, but he is an honest gentleman."

Orrell said to the soldiers, "Take him away then, if he is your friend."

But the bailiff, maddened with bad brandy, and worse fanaticism, was not so easily pacified. He went up to the officer commanding the party of foot, and when the officer raised his hand, Purchase drew back and offered the point of his sword, but did not thrust.

"You are mad—go to your lodgings," cried the officer.

"I've been one of the Life Guards," stammered Purchase.

"The more shame for you to be here," retorted the officer, striking at him with his sword. Purchase then ran back toward the Horse Guards and pushed between the horses. The mob hung back, but he cried, "D—n me, I will go." In the mean time the officer first threatened had ridden off to his captain and complained of Purchase. "Make up to him and cut him to pieces," was the captain's prompt answer; the officer returned to give Purchase the coup-de-grace, but in the mean time he had escaped. A narrow escape it was. He had gone up to another officer named Rensborough, and made a thrust at him. A Life Guard who remembered Purchase in Flanders, seeing this, beat down his point.

"You rascal," cried the angry soldier, "have you a mind to kill my officer?" and

slashed at the drunken bailiff's head; but Purchase, cunning even in drink, threw himself back against a wall; the soldier's sword striking the pent-house, broke, and Purchase slipped among the crowd.

Orrell, the quiet man, saw all this, and fearing a general engagement between the mob and the Guards, effected an honourable retreat down Drury-lane, halting at a tavern door to talk with a clergyman, till the Foot Guards came by. As they passed, Orrell called out to the captain:

"Captain, the mob is very strong—I wish you good success." The crowd was then slowly dispersed by the foot and horsemen.

Of the three scapegoats brought to trial, Dammarel, the waterman, was sentenced to death, but was pardoned; Willis, the footman, and Purchase, the drunken bailiff, were acquitted.

Sacheverell's sentence was really a victory. Five meeting-houses had been burnt, the prosecution overthrew the Whig ministry, and made the hot-headed doctor's fortune. Crowds followed him to kiss his hand. He presented his counsel, Sir Simon Harcourt, with a silver-gilt basin, having a pompous Latin inscription upon it, supposed to be written by Atterbury. He was lodged in the Temple like a king, and afterwards made a triumphal progress through England, sowing sedition as he rode. The long dull sermon he preached at St. Saviour's, Southwark, upon the expiration of his sentence, he sold for one hundred pounds, and the eager bookseller printed forty thousand copies. A month after the expiration of the first sentence, foolish Queen Anne gave the clerical demagogue the fat rectory of St. Andrew's, Holborn. He wheedled in among the ministry, and provided for a needy brother, and soon after a rich kinsman in Derbyshire left the popular Tory hero a considerable estate. In 1713, Sacheverell preached before the House of Commons, and the sermon was formally printed. Sacheverell seems to have been what Sarah, that violent Duchess of Marlborough, called him, "an ignorant, impudent incendiary; a man who was the scorn even of those who made use of him as a tool." Swift, indeed, confessed that the Tories hated and despised this idol of a day. Bishop Burnet says, "He was a bold, insolent man, with a very small measure of religion, virtue, learning, or good sense; but he resolved to force himself into popularity and preferment by the most petulant railings at Dissenters and Low Churchmen in several

sermons and libels, written without either chasteness of style or liveliness of expression." Sacheverell was, in a word, a narrow-minded, strong-willed charlatan, trading on the discord of Queen Anne's days. He was very ignorant, and a satirical writer of the day, supposed to be De Foe, mentions the following delicious blunder of his:

"They concur like parallel lines meeting in one common centre." Upon which a bitter epigrammatist of the day wrote:

As Brother Creech hung in the sacred twine,
So may it please this reverend wise divine
To hang himself; 'twould make a parallel line.

O how it would please our common phanatics,
To see High Church hanging in such mathematics.

Swift, who stuck at nothing for his party, interceded for Sacheverell, whom he secretly despised. In a letter of Sacheverell to Swift, the former begs for an opportunity of expressing his gratitude to that "eminent patriot," Mr. Secretary St. John, for whom no one that wishes for the welfare of his Church or country can have too great a veneration. This "eminent patriot" was Bolingbroke, Pope's idol and friend.

The burnt-out firework eventually died in 1724, and by his will bequeathed to Bishop Atterbury, then in exile, and the supposed writer of the defence he made before the House of Lords, the sum of five hundred pounds. According to Swift, the unwise prosecution of Sacheverell was owing to the personal rage of Godolphin, whom Sacheverell, in his sermon, had indirectly sneered at as a Volpone, and was strongly against the advice of Lord Somers.

THE CASE OF JOSIAH MORSE.

CHAPTER I.

JOSIAH MORSE was highly esteemed by his friends and acquaintances; but he was not, it must be conceded, a person of any great refinement or cultivation. He dropped his h's lavishly; not so much dropping them, indeed, as flinging them down: as though they were trump cards certain to win tricks, and he a vulgar and impetuous whist-player.

He was of humble origin. His father, Jonathan Morse, occupied, during a long term of years, the position of butler in the household of old Mr. Anthony Piper (the head of the well-known firm of Piper, Peters, Peck, and Co., of Austin Friars, merchants), and had been much trusted and respected by that gentleman. Jonathan had died in harness, in a butler's sober suit

of broadcloth and white cravat may be so designated, his demise being hastened, it was generally understood, by over zeal and exertion on the occasion of bottling and laying down a pipe of very superior port, the property of his employer. Old Anthony lived to drink perhaps more of the wine—it was very fruity and full-bodied—than was quite good for him, and to do something for the orphan child of his deceased servitor. Josiah, at a tender age, entered the office in Austin Friars, a small stipend being paid to him on the condition "that he ran about, and made himself useful." His position was described as that of "odd boy": an unflattering appellation, but, under the circumstances, sufficiently appropriate. Very humble, indeed menial, duties were required of the youth. He was sometimes called upon to brush the clothes and polish the boots of members of the firm and the superior clerks; he summoned cabs, carried carpet-bags, ran errands, posted letters; he bore to the office luncheon trays from neighbouring restaurants; and if any gentleman in the service of the house, for the better carrying on of his labours, needed the refreshment of a half-pint of ale, Josiah was despatched to procure that measure of liquor from the nearest tavern.

Necessarily the education of an "odd boy" can be but of a fitful kind. Still, Josiah was industrious, attentive, and very humble. He was grateful for instruction from any quarter. In addition to business habits, and a knowledge of the City, he soon acquired a fair measure of useful learning. He could write a neat hand, and spell correctly. He devoted much of his spare time to the study of arithmetic. He was gradually growing from an "odd boy" to a junior clerk.

This was quite as well for him. For during one of those tornadoes which at intervals sweep through the City, and appal the money market, terrifying every one, toppling down very deep-founded edifices, carrying devastation and desolation hither and thither, the famous house of Piper, Peters, Peck, and Co. fell to pieces. It had not been quite safe for some time, people then discovered. Important beams, and joists, and supports had disappeared, no one knew exactly how or when. But there had been "a sinking" of the building, certainly. The old members of the firm had died off. There had been considerable withdrawal of capital. It had been supposed that the house had "settled," and remained secure, notwithstanding these disturbing influences. Nevertheless, it

went down upon very slight provocation. The young men who were now the representatives of the firm were very smart and clever; but it was affirmed they had sought to make money 'oo rapidly, had speculated indiscreetly, had gone at a high pressure speed with an unsafe boiler. The result should not have surprised any one.

However, it greatly astonished Josiah Morse. He had believed implicitly in the firm. Its bankruptcy was inconceivable to him. The rising in the air and the soaring away like a balloon of the Bank of England, had seemed to him as reasonable a thing to expect as the collapse of Piper and Co. For some time amazement and mortification left him speechless, motionless. Then he bethought him that he must stir himself. His pockets were empty, and he had his own mouth, and other mouths besides, to fill. For he had married, and his wife was in the habit of presenting him with children in a way that, for liberality and frequency, was highly admirable, but considered otherwise, decidedly inconvenient.

He was for some time out of employment. He found his accomplishments as a clerk quite a drug in the market. Care was on 'Change; deep gloom oppressed the City. Speculation was paralysed; enterprise was torpid, hounded by despair. That things never had been so flat was the unanimous opinion. But gradually the fog lifted. The voices of investors began to be heard like the notes of birds after a storm—timidly yet most musically. In time the City was itself again. Finance rose from its slumbers like a giant refreshed. Josiah Morse found himself engaged at a fair salary as clerk to a new company recently launched under most propitious auspices. He had met, quite by chance, in Change-alley, one of his old employers—young Mr. Adolphus Peck—looking as though bettered and brightened by the friction of misfortune undergone by his departed firm. He was glossy from top to toe; wore a flower in his button-hole, and carried the newest and slimmest of green silk umbrellas. He was the pink of City dandyism. He greeted the old servant of his house with the cheery affability which had always characterised him. He listened to the story of Josiah's needs, and interspersed comments which, if flippant, were not unfriendly. He gave Josiah a cigar—a very good one—from one of the most costly and ornate of cases. Further, he promised Josiah a situation in a new company of which he (Mr. Adolphus Peck) was secretary. And he was as good as his word.

CHAPTER II.

THE Stock Exchange "hath bubbles as the water has," but that the Great Patagonian Railway Company was not of these, public opinion had quite decided. It was not to be regarded as a "speculative concern," but as "a moral certainty," and in such wise well worthy of the attention of capitalists interested in permanent investments. It was an undertaking, all agreed, in which it behoved people to become enduring proprietors. "Don't buy to-day and sell to-morrow merely to profit by a chance rise in the market; but lodge all the money you can spare in the thing, rest quiet, receive your dividends, and be comfortable for ever." So ran the tenour of general advice on the subject. Interest at the rate of seven per cent per annum was guaranteed by the Imperial Government of Patagonia upon the paid-up capital of the company. Moreover, the shareholders were to participate largely in the profits that would indubitably accrue from the working of the railway. A certain proportion of the shares was reserved for allotment among the native investors. The railway was to be constructed on the broad-gauge principle, and the carriages were to be of unusual size, to accommodate the notoriously colossal physical proportions of the inhabitants of Patagonia.

Josiah Morse's joy was very great when he was enabled to go home to his wife and announce the fact of his engagement as clerk in the London office of the Great Patagonian Railway Company. He had been so long unemployed, and his new appointment promised so much. He bought a cheap map, though he could ill afford the disbursement, in order that he might thoroughly acquaint himself with the situation of Patagonia relatively to the better known portions of the universe. He lived, "over the water," as he would sometimes vaguely indicate. In truth it was a long way over the water. You crossed London Bridge, and then branching off to the left, proceeded some miles until you came to rather a wild and unprepossessing-looking district, through which a slimy canal sluggishly serpentine.

Here were rugged and barren market-gardens; there gaunt carcasses of small houses, of most cheap construction, which yet the builder, owing to pecuniary deficiencies, had not been able to complete; muddy roads that led nowhere, and ended suddenly in a morass of mortar; patches of waste land, half hemmed in by broken hoardings, devoted to the accumulation

of broken crockery, and the corpses of domestic animals, oyster-shells, cast-off shoes, and refuse of all kinds. These were the characteristics of the neighbourhood in which Mr. Morse resided. His house was of diminutive size: more like a nest of cupboards than a collection of rooms. "But it's cheap and airy, and near the Rye," he would sometimes urge in its favour. The back windows looked on to the canal, and on that account it was generally necessary to keep them closed and covered by blinds. For the canal emitted at times most unsavoury odours; moreover, the bargemen who toiled upon its waves were prone to use the noisiest and naughtiest of language; while the dirty little boys, who resorted thither at all hours for bathing purposes, afforded a spectacle of unadorned nature upon which civilised eyes could not be expected to gaze otherwise than with reprobation and discomfort. Still Josiah was proud of his dwelling-place. "It's 'ealthy for the children; it's more comfortable than lodgings, and ever so much cheaper; besides which, it's our own. So long as we pays our rent we're independent of any and everybody; and we've really a splendid garden for Mrs. Hem" (for so he alluded to his wife), "to get through with her washing."

Mrs. Morse was one of those small, pale, flaccid-looking women, whose mission in the world would seem to be naught if not maternal. She had always, as it were, a large family in possession, and much wealth of the same kind in expectancy. So far as credit is due to such as increase its population, Mrs. Morse deserved well of her country. Other faculties she might lack, but in this respect the revolving years found her unfailing. She was over to be seen with a child in her arms, pressing its tiny hands against her lips as though it was some curious kind of pipe she was smoking, the infant's arm the stem, and the body the bowl.

And Josiah was proud of his children, especially of their number. Upon their quality he was perhaps less entitled to plume himself. Robuster infants might any day be seen anywhere. But so large a family, so phenomenally near to each other in point of age, so liberally sprinkled with twins, could not ordinarily be encountered. As other and richer men vaunt concerning their collections of plate or pictures, so poor Josiah gloried in his congregation of children. If the announcement that so frequently greeted his ears of an addition to his household circle brought with it a mo-

ment's anxiety and foreboding, there soon followed a feeling of content and gratification of a most genuine kind. "You can hardly set your foot down without treading on a child," he would sometimes say of his home, with the air of one describing a delightful and enviable state of things. Of course it was hard work for him to find food and raiment for so many. But he liked hard work. He had known nothing but hard work all his life. It suited him, was comfortable to him. His great grievance had been when he could not get work to do, when the panic in the City, and the collapse of Piper and Co., had deprived him of employment. That had been, indeed, a trying time for him. His expenses went on, but his income had stopped. What are known as "the two ends" could not any how be made to meet. To be sure, he had put by a little for a "rainy day," but he had never counted upon the day being quite so rainy, or lasting quite so long. At one time it seemed to him that the clouds would never disperse, or the sun shine again upon him. He would return from the City, after futile efforts to obtain occupation, and glare at the murky waters of the canal at the back of his house with misanthropic, almost suicidal sentiments. His children were a little too hungry to be a solace to him. His wife was ill up-stairs, with yet another infant. His rent was unpaid. The baker had threatened; the butcher had bullied; the parish rates had been very unpleasant. There had been a menace of cutting off the water supply. Happily, just at this juncture young Mr. Peck had been met with. The tide turned. Josiah was as prosperous as he had ever been in his life. Indeed, he had never before been in receipt of so large a salary. There seemed every prospect of things going on now very smoothly and happily in Pleasant-terrace, for so was entitled, not too appropriately, the row of houses in which Josiah Morse and his family resided.

CHAPTER III.

THERE was a great deal to be done at the office of the Great Patagonian Railway Company. Much issuing of circulars, advertising, and distributing of prospectuses, with lists of the board of directors, estimates of probable profits, and particulars of the enterprise. Then came the receipt of numberless applications for shares, and an allotment of scrip certificates. For months Josiah Morse had his hands very full indeed. He was at work day and

night. He did not so much object to this, for he was paid for "over-time," and was in such wise enabled to discharge the liabilities he had incurred during his period of forced abstinence from toil. Still he found his new duties very arduous. The secretary did not spare the old servant of his disbanded firm. "I know I can rely upon you, Morse," Mr. Peck would say; "so I will leave you to attend to these matters. The other fellows are strangers to me; but *you* I know, and can trust. Be sure not to quit the office until this job's disposed of." Thereupon Josiah would find a severe burden of labour imposed upon him, while Mr. Peck, in the glossiest of clothes, and a flower in his button-hole, would turn his back upon the City, and disport himself at the West End. He was of genial disposition, and fond of society. His affable presence and cheery conversational powers obtained for him acceptance in all sorts of quarters. The City dandy was a highly popular man. Impertinent he might be, but still only in a good-natured way. Flippant perhaps, but not disagreeably so. He dressed well, and lived well. His "little dinners" at his club were really most admirable entertainments. And then he was a person worth knowing, people said. He could possibly distribute slices of the good fortune which pertained to the Great Patagonian Railway Company. The shares were at a premium; an allotment at par was well worth having; was a certain bonus to the allottee. The reserve of shares for the native investors of Patagonia might bear a little diminution in this way. For, after all, it was not so very certain that any native investors really existed. The misadventures of the firm of Piper and Co. were now forgotten, or were attributed to the misconduct of the departed members of the house. At any rate, Mr. Adolphus Peck was acquitted of blame in the matter. A junior partner, how could he possibly prevent the seniors doing what they had done? That was the way in which the world now regarded the affair. And of course it was nobody's business at the West End to marvel or to chide because the secretary of the great company chose to leave so large a share of his duties to be discharged by his subordinate, Josiah Morse. What did the West End know of Josiah Morse, indeed? Nothing whatever, it need scarcely be said.

Still it was hard upon Josiah. He rejoiced at the compliments paid him by one of his old and much-revered employers, at

the value set upon his services, at the confidence placed in his integrity; but he felt that his responsibilities were onerous indeed. His labour was incessant. He had no respite. There was more and more work to be done. A numerous staff of clerks assisted him, but still the duties of supervision and instruction rested with him. The correspondence of the company was undertaken by Mr. Peck, and accomplished expeditiously, for the secretary was a neat and skilful writer of letters; but he required much preliminary cramming from Josiah, who had not himself much epistolary faculty, who knew what should be said, but scarcely the most fitting way of saying it. Then came extraordinary meetings of shareholders; calls upon the shares; extension of the capital of the company; the issue of dividend warrants to the proprietors; the raising of funds by means of debentures, convertible and non-convertible into capital stock. It was enough to turn any man's brain. At times Josiah hardly knew what he was saying or what he was doing. He was so overwhelmed with business. Then came contracts with manufacturers of rolling stock, with coal and iron merchants, and various other traders; the publishing of specifications, the receipt and opening of sealed tenders, and multitudinous transactions thence arising. Meantime the register of shareholders was swelling to the proportions of a Post Office Directory. The board was meeting incessantly, and for the better transaction of business was subdividing itself into special committees. Now and again auditors were overhauling and inspecting the books and accounts of the company. But the whole prodigious turmoil resulting from the originating and launching of the Great Patagonian Railway Company is not to be described, or even a notion of it conveyed, by any ordinary measure of narrative. Josiah Morse had prayed for work. It had come upon him with a vengeance.

"That 'orrid City!" Mrs. Morse was now frequently found to exclaim. A little unreasonable, perhaps, for, but for the City, how would she and her many little ones have fared? But wives are apt thus thoughtlessly to condemn their husbands' pursuits, forgetful that these have pecuniary results of an important kind. To despise the City is in many cases to despise income, well-being, life itself. Few can afford the luxury of such contempt. But poor Mrs. Morse simply meant to convey her regret that her husband should be ever so pressing

occupied and so long absent from her side. She saw very little of him now. He left home early and he returned late. He rarely beheld his children. He was so wearied when he came back from the City, that he wanted nothing so much as quiet, rest, and sleep; to be let alone in fact. And at that time his offspring had been all put to bed. His faithful partner had always ready for him something nice in the way of supper—something hot at any rate. She perceived with pain that his appetite was failing him. Even his once dearly loved dish of tripe had no charms for him now. His digestive powers were disorganised. And his temper was no longer what it had been. He was growing morose, surly, and sulky. He was disinclined for converse of any kind upon any subject. Directly he came in he would kick off his boots, light his favourite clay pipe, mix himself a strong tumbler of gin-and-water—the spirit being curiously odorous of turpentine—fling himself upon the sofa, and then—he hadn't a word for any one. He objected to being addressed even by his wife, the mother of his children. Many hours of his Sunday even—once how fondly looked forward to as a day of rest and relaxation!—he was now compelled to devote to arrears of work brought home from the office of the great company. He abandoned his chapel. He was actually rude to his once favourite minister when he happened to look in quite by chance for a friendly cup of tea and a muffin in the evening—he had been made welcome on previous occasions, after the achievement of his labours of the seventh day—and then—it was very painful to Mrs. Morse—Josiah had spoken with undue severity to the children. It was even alleged of him—but one is loth to credit it—that in a moment of angry forgetfulness, he had positively slapped, and passionately, certain of the twins. It was clear that things were now hardly as they should be in Pleasant-terrace.

All debts had been paid, and there was money to spare. A new carpet had been purchased for the front sitting-room, and the elder children of the female sex were receiving lessons in French and music at a day school in the neighbourhood. Mrs. Morse had been treated with a silk dress of the substantial texture almost of the crackling of pork, and a bonnet that was quite a flower-show in itself. Still her heart was heavy within her silken bodice, and her head was uneasy for all its floral glories. Her Josiah was a changed

man. If she ventured a complaint, however timidly and mildly expressed, he answered her harshly, or thrust money into her hands abruptly. He had not been wont to treat her so. She prized money, of course. She was a sensible woman, and a mother; she knew the cost of things, and the needs of a large family; but still she loved her husband, and set store upon his affection. What had come to him?

He was a man of small stature, rather feeble frame, and colourless complexion. He dressed simply, in dark-coloured clothes, wearing a black satin stock, with a visible buckle on the nape of his neck, and a hat tilted backward, as though not sufficiently capacious to contain his forehead. He was bald, with just a fringe of dry, tawny, untidy hair decking his occiput, and a crescent of pallid, fluffy whisker on either cheek-bone. He was myopic, and always wore spectacles. It may be gathered that there was nothing very impressive or picturesque about his presence.

He had returned home one night later, and apparently more jaded and exhausted, than usual. His facial expression betrayed loss of temper, and his actions were remarkable for their abruptness and impetuosity. Mrs. Morse observed with pain that his hands were very tremulous, and that the bottle and the tumbler clattered strangely together, as he prepared for himself his nightly drink. The turpentine odour was very strong in the room. He had some difficulty in lighting his pipe, but with a needless explosion of anger, he declined assistance in that operation. His voice was husky, and flat in tone. What had come to him? Mrs. Morse again asked herself. Was he sober? She winced at the thought of the inquiry.

She ventured tenderly to place her cool, thin hand upon his forehead as he reclined on the sofa, apparently in a state of savage torpor. How his forehead burned!

"I don't think I'd drink any more to-night, Josh, dear," she said, and very timidly she tried to remove his tumbler. He was very angry.

"Let me be, can't you?" he cried. "Can't I even have a moment's peace in my own house? There, that's what you want, I suppose." He flung upon the table a handful of sovereigns; some of them fell, his action was so vehement, and rolled about the floor. "There's plenty more where they come from," he said, with a wild and acrid laugh, as his wife stooped to search for the fallen coins; "and now

go to bed." Presently she left him. She had rarely before been so frightened or so distressed.

She could not sleep. Was it safe to leave him? she asked. Was there no danger that he might set the house on fire? Not that he was intoxicated; she could not, would not, think that. "He had his senses about him," as she expressed it. And yet his aspect and manner were certainly very strange. Long hours she waited in great perturbation of mind for him to come up-stairs. Her only solace meanwhile had been to stoop now and then, and gently kiss the soft cheek of her last baby, asleep in its cradle close to the bedside. At length she heard his approach. His footsteps were uneven and very heavy. The banisters creaked noisily, as he clutched them, and pulled himself up with their aid.

The light was very dim in the bedroom. Still she could see that Josiah's face was of a ghastly pallor. She half-closed her eyes, simulating sleep. But her ears were alert to the sound of his every movement.

"Hemmer!" he said—for so he always called her, but she had been christened Emma—"are you awake?" His voice was not wrathful now, but weak and faint as from alarm.

"What is it, Josh dear?" she asked.

"Send for a policeman."

"A policeman, Josh?"

"Send for a policeman, I say."

"Is it thieves?" and at the thought she took her child from its cradle, and pressed it to her bosom. It was to her the most precious thing in the house, and impulsively she thought that the thieves, if thieves were indeed at work in Pleasant-terrace, would be of a like opinion. She did not, of course, know much about the sentiments of burglars on such subjects.

"Yes, it's thieves," said Josh, with a feeble, husky laugh. "But not as you mean. I'm a thief. Fetch a policeman. Let me give myself up. I'm a thief, I say. I want to get it off my mind. I want all the world to know it. Do you hear? I say I'm a thief."

"You, Josh dear?"

"Me! I've robbed the company. I've been robbing 'em these months past. Those sovereigns I gave you down-stairs—well—I stole 'em. I can't go on like this. Let

justice have me. Let me be handcuffed—locked up—sent to the hulks. I deserve it all. I make no defence. I plead guilty to the charge. I haven't a word to say for myself. I'm a scoundrel out and out. I can't make out why I done it. Still I done it, and the law must take me. I must stand in the dock and hear my sentence. It's ruin of course, but that can't be helped now. I ought to have thought of it before. Yes, it's ruin. There isn't a doubt about that." He was strangely excited.

"But the children, Josh!" she pleaded in agonised tones. True woman and mother, they stood first in her thoughts. "The children, Josh!" Her voice was indescribably touching. He burst into tears.

"Poor things!" he cried. "I've ruined the lot of 'em. They're a thief's children all, even to the baby in your arms, Hemmer! They'll be pointed at in the streets, and called after as they go to school. They mustn't go any more. Poor things! getting on so nice too, and me so proud of them. But it's all over now. It's ruin, beggary; and it's me that's done it."

"Oh, Josh!"

"Fetch a policeman!" he cried again. And then he fell down heavily. He had fainted.

She replaced the baby in its cradle—it was very good—it did not cry, did not even wake—and was at his side in a moment plying restoratives. In a few minutes he was conscious, or semi-conscious, again. He stared vacantly about, muttered unintelligibly, and then closing his eyes, sank into a troubled, painful sleep. He was lying on the floor just as he had fallen, with his weary, burning head supported by her arm. She feared to move lest she should disturb him. So, cold and numbed, and intensely miserable, she retained for some hours the same cramped attitude. Her tearful eyes turning now to the helpless baby in the cradle, now to her suffering husband. Poor woman!

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BOOK II.

CHAPTER VII. PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

AN hour before the revelation made to Gerald Hardinge by Mrs. Entwistle, Doctor Asprey stood in his own hall watching Mr. Delabole, who was taking his hat and light over-coat from the servant.

"What has become of Vane?" asked the great capitalist.

"He has gone back to the dining-room to look for a pencil with which he had been making some memoranda, and which he has left behind him. By the way, Mr. Delabole," continued the doctor, "our friend has, to say the least of it, a certain infirmity of temper. His manner just now, when I was compelled, according to my invariable practice, to refuse him permission to smoke, was almost offensive."

"You took it remarkably well, I must say, my dear doctor; but the fact is, our friend, as you know perfectly, has taken a little too much of your very excellent claret, and is scarcely responsible for his sayings and doings."

"Perhaps so," said Doctor Asprey, "but that doesn't better his conduct in my eyes. I don't pretend, at all events to you, to be squeamish about such matters, but I have a contempt for a man who takes too much wine, and a special contempt for one who is quarrelsome in his cups. In vino veritas is a perfectly trustworthy saying; and a man whom good wine turns into a savage is, depend upon it, both undesirable and unreliable as a friend."

"What you say applies generally without doubt," said Mr. Delabole, "though I

think you are a little mistaken in the present instance. This conquest of Mrs. Bendixen is a great triumph for Vane, and he is just a thought *tête montée* over it."

"The expression is clever and refined," said the doctor; "but the English equivalent strikes me as being much more applicable in the present instance. Of such a man, they say in the vernacular, that he 'cannot stand beans,' and that appears to me graphically descriptive of Mr. Vane's condition. Success has made him insolent, even to those who helped him on his upward path."

"It still lies within the resources of science to double him up, as the Chicken remarked of Mr. Dombey," said Mr. Delabole, with a pleasant smile. "Until that necessity arrives, and so long as he is useful, we will treat him well. Here he is. Now, Philip, the night air, even mild as it is at present, not being particularly beneficial to the health of three hundred guinea brougham horses, perhaps you won't mind hurrying yourself a bit."

"I have been after my pencil-case," said Vane; "it had rolled under the table, and I had an awful bother to get at it."

"It would have been perfectly safe," said the doctor, who seemed to find it impossible to get over his annoyance, "and the servants would have been certain to find it in the morning."

"I wouldn't have let it spend a night under this roof for anything," said Vane, with a thick laugh; "its habit of truth would have deteriorated, and it would have written nothing but humbugging prescriptions, or——"

"There now, come along," said Mr. Delabole, seizing his friend's arm, and hurrying him past the grave servant in black, who stood by the street-door.

"Good-night, doctor. I shall be glad to learn how matters progress in the Palace Gardens district, if you will take an opportunity of calling upon me in the City."

Whatever sobering influence the calm night air had upon Philip Vane, its effect in sweetening his temper was very small indeed. He puffed angrily and in silence at the cigar which he had lit immediately on entering his friend's brougham, and when he addressed himself to speech, it was only to reiterate the complaints to which Mr. Delabole had already referred.

"What infernal affectation that is in Asprey," he growled, "not letting people smoke in his place; might as well be at one's maiden aunt's in the country, where one has to go into the kitchen after the servants are gone to bed, and puff up the chimney."

"It's because there are so many people of the maiden aunt class, who of necessity visit his house, that the doctor is compelled to be strict. He couldn't possibly have delicate patients coming into a place reeking of tobacco."

"Oh, of course," said Philip Vane, sullenly, "that is always the way now. It is only necessary for me to object to anything that a fellow says or does, for you to become his warmest supporter and most enthusiastic admirer. Now I tell you——"

"Now I tell you," said Mr. Delabole, as the carriage stopped, "that here we are. Will you come in and have a drink, or shall the brougham take you home?"

"I will come in and have a talk," said Philip Vane, ungraciously; "there are one or two business matters upon which I particularly wish to speak to you."

"All right; in with you," said Mr. Delabole, and with a half-smile and a half-shrug he opened the street-door with his latch-key, and gave his companion admittance.

Mr. Delabole lived in Piccadilly, on the first floor of a large house, the whole of which was let out as chambers. His rooms, handsome in themselves, were handsomely fitted and furnished in what was perhaps a somewhat florid style, but that was the taste of the upholsterer rather than of Mr. Delabole, who, however, found no fault with it. There was a drop of Hebraic blood in Mr. Delabole's veins (the maiden name of his mother, Mrs. Munker, long since deceased, was Rachael Hart, and her residence before marriage Cutler-street, Houndsditch, where her father kept the Net of Lemons), which made him delight in bright colours of rich and gaudy patterns. Everything

was just a little overdone: the antique furniture was too old; you waded up to your ankles in the soft velvet pile carpet, and the tall lamps, standing here and there, were so shaded, that all those portions of the room not immediately within their focus were in perfect darkness.

There was plenty of light, however, on a small table laid out with the materials for a choice cold supper, and bearing a handsome stand of spirit decanters. Mr. Vane, entering the room before his host, advanced to this table, smiled contemptuously as he glanced at it, and threw himself into an easy-chair by its side.

"Quite right, my dear Philip," said Mr. Delabole, bustling into the room; "glad to see you seated at the table; no sensible man goes to bed without something to act as a stay in case he should happen to have one of those confounded fits of waking in the night, no matter how good a dinner he may have eaten. You are going to try a spoonful of that mayonnaise, a morsel of that Roquefort?"

"Not I," said Philip; "it is not every one who can afford to play with his digestion, or his figure, as you can."

"Ah! I forgot," said Mr. Delabole, pleasantly, "I am not going to be married to a rich and handsome widow, and to the ladies I adore a spoonful of salad or a crumb of cheese will not make much difference. But you will drink something, I suppose?"

"Yes; what's become of your man, the foreigner?"

"Fritz? He's gone to bed—why?"

"Oh, nothing; I only thought I should like a glass of beer; I suppose, though, he would have been too much of a fine gentleman to fetch it."

"My dear fellow, I am not too much of a fine gentleman, at all events. I would run round to the public-house and fetch it myself."

"Don't be an ass, Delabole. It would have been a grand thing though to have seen the great millionaire with a pewter pot in his hand, in the middle of Piccadilly. No, I'll have some brandy; it will be better for me."

He rose as he spoke, and pouring out more than half a tumbler of raw spirit, swallowed a large portion of it, and then filled up the tumbler with iced water.

"I wanted that to pull me together," he said, smacking his lips; "not that I failed in doing justice to the doctor's wine; but when one is a little out of sorts, wine

somehow doesn't seem enough, and one wants the grip which brandy gives."

"You can't be out of sorts, surely," said Delabole.

"Nothing really the matter, only a little upset, that is all." His voice was growing a little thick, and he sat glaring before him in a half-stolid, half-defiant manner.

"By the way, what did you think of Gerald Hardinge?" said Delabole, turning upon him suddenly, and closely observing the effect of his question.

Philip Vane's bloodshot eyes gleamed savagely, as he said:

"I hate him!"

"That's a strong sentiment to be roused by a man whom you have never seen before, isn't it? Particularly in you, who are generally such a remarkably cool customer. I suppose, however, that there is hate, as well as love, 'at first sight,' though I confess I don't see what there is to call forth any such feeling toward Mr. Hardinge."

"He's a bumptious, swaggering young idiot," said Vane, sullenly.

"No, not quite all that," said Mr. Delabole. "He is bumptious, and ~~swaggering~~, and young, I admit; but the two first simply result from the last. It is the tendency of youth to swagger. I was very objectionable in that way myself, as a boy, and I can fancy that even you, my dear Philip, were not the most retiring lad in your school."

"Well, I am not going to chop words with you," said Vane. "I repeat what I said, I hate this fellow!"

"Do you know, I begin to think, Philip, that you are jealous of Mr. Hardinge."

"Jealous!" cried Vane, springing forward from his chair. "What do you mean by that? how could I be jealous of him?"

"What an excitable party it is to-night!" said Mr. Delabole, quietly. "Don't you recollect Asprey's telling us about this young fellow whispering to Mrs. Bendixen, and paying her great court one evening when you were not present?"

"Oh!" said Vane, lying back with an air of relief, "I remember, now you mention it, but I had forgotten all about it. No," he added, with a scornful laugh, "I'm not jealous; I stand too well in that quarter to fear any rival." And his fingers began playing with the locket on his watch-guard.

Mr. Delabole had never removed his eyes from his companion during this little colloquy. At its conclusion he said:

"Well, whatever cause your dislike springs from, you must not let it influence

your manner toward this young man. It was to his guardian, or godmother, or whoever the old woman is that he lives with, that Asprey was sent for during dinner. He told me so in the hall, and said that the old lady had had a very narrow squeak for it this time, and that unquestionably her ticket is taken for the down line. When she starts on that journey, our young friend comes into all the money."

"And a nice use he'll make of it," sneered Philip Vane.

"A nice use *we* shall make of it, my dear Philip," said Mr. Delabole, with a light laugh. "For if I can carry out my idea, most of that worthy old person's savings will come to the Terra del Fuegos, or some of our other ventures. Therefore, as I was just saying, there is every reason why you should not permit the feelings with which you say you regard this young man to influence your manner towards him. He is by no means an idiot, as you suppose, and was quite sharp enough to perceive the unpleasant impression which he had created in you."

"All right," said Vane, sullenly. "I'll take care of that. You never saw me blunder in business, and if this is put to me as a matter of business, I shall, of course, not import my private feelings into it. Now I think I'll go home."

"Stay one minute," said Mr. Delabole, who perceived that the effects of the drink had gone off; "I find I must get a few days' change of air, and there are two or three things which I want to say to you before I go."

"Oh! you are going at once, are you?" said Vane. "All right; as we cannot both be conveniently away at the same time, it will suit me better that you should go now than later."

"I'm glad of that," said Mr. Delabole.

"I didn't mean anything," said Vane, reddening at the sarcastic inflection of his friend's voice. "I'm not a swaggerer like young Hardinge. Only Mrs. Bendixen is going down next week to stop with some friends in the Isle of Wight, and I have an invitation to the same house. That's all."

"I shall be back by that time, and you shall go and do your courtship at your leisure, my dear Philip. By the way, when is the marriage to come off?"

"About the beginning of September, I suppose; that will be my first chance of a clear fortnight. She talks about a month, but I couldn't stand that."

"No, of course not. And where are you going to live?"

"There is a house of hers in Curzon-street, which will be vacant at Christmas, and upon which she seems to have set her mind. We shall stay at an hotel, I suppose, until the place is done up and re-furnished, and that kind of thing."

"Curzon-street will be handy for Hardinge, who lives close by. We must not, however, commence operations in that quarter until we see what is going to become of the old woman, who, by Asprey's account, is marvellously sharp, and might put the young fellow on his guard. Now let me talk to you about Irving's matter."

"Irving? Oh, the Indian man."

"Exactly, the Indian man! Gillman has been making some particular inquiries about Irving. It appears that he was a struggling man in Calcutta, junior partner in a merchant's house, adding very slowly to the capital which he had embarked in the firm, and almost tempted to withdraw his money and return to England. One day, a man came to him, bearing a letter of introduction from a common acquaintance, a lieutenant in a native regiment, with a proposition for some wild speculation in indigo or cotton—I don't know which—which required capital to float it. This capital the visitor asked Irving to supply, pointing out to him at the same time fairly enough, that though the risk was very great, the profits, if successful, would be in proportion. Young Irving was almost at desperation point then, and after a little deliberation he agreed to find the money, and the speculation was launched. By this single coup Irving became a rich man, and then, as is nearly always the case, luck seemed to stick to him. But in a strange superstitious kind of way—he is a Scotchman—he always connected the young lieutenant, who introduced the speculator to him, with his good luck, and took care to connect him with all the schemes in which he himself embarked in the future."

"Not a bad thing for the lieutenant."

"A very good thing, for Irving looked upon him as a kind of guardian angel, and more than once refused to be mixed up with operations which his soldier-friend regarded suspiciously. Nor was it a bad thing for Irving, for the lieutenant was naturally a keen, clear-headed fellow, and owed his advance in life much more to his own brains than to Irving's assistance."

"And are they both alive? and does the alliance still continue?"

"Yes, to both questions. They are both alive; but young Irving, who adventured his few hundreds, is old Mr. Irving, of Combe Park, Surrey, and Marine Villa, Torquay, bank director, and one of the richest commoners in England. While the lieutenant is Sir Geoffry Heriot, K.C.B., retired general officer."

"And you are telling me this story," said Philip, yawning, "apropos of——"

"Apropos of our getting Irving to join us in the direction of the Terra del Fuegos. Gillman seems convinced that it can only be managed with Sir Geoffry Heriot's sanction and concurrence."

"And how is that to be obtained?"

"By representing to Sir Geoffry himself the stability of the concern and the desirability of his taking shares in it."

"It is worth while throwing out a sprat for the sake of hooking such a fine salmon as this Mr. Irving. Why not tell Sir Geoffry that so many shares, now at such and such a premium, have been placed at his private disposal?"

"Simply because that would be the exact way to defeat our object! When I was a young man, many years ago, a friend told me a story which I have never forgotten. His father was a banker at Athens. At the principal hotel there arrived a Frenchman, a magnifico, a duke with an historical name. He lived splendidly; his retinue was most numerous; he gave superb entertainments. After he had been at the hotel about a month, he one day called upon my friend's father, asking if the firm would cash a bill, which he would draw on his bankers in Paris. My friend's father had heard of the duke's pomp and magnificence, had seen some of the outward signs of his luxury in the number and splendour of his servants. But in business he was a cautious man. Why did not the duke bring an introduction to him from the French ambassador? The duke laughed scornfully. Was it likely that he, a descendant of Clovis, would condescend to enter into any relations with such canaille as an ambassador sent from the Republic, then existing in France? The banker did not reply. He was just turning round to instruct his head-cashier to discount the bill at the current rate when the duke said: 'Give me twenty thousand piastres now, and I will give you my bill for twenty-five thousand payable in a fortnight.' In an instant the banker saw the style of man he had to deal with. In an instant he closed his desk, put the keys in his pocket, and

saying, "That is not our method of doing business," bowed his visitor out. The next day the duke was arrested as a swindling impostor. Memo: never offer too much, lest your motives be suspected."

"You're right," said Philip Vane, "and I can't conceive why I made the suggestion, except that I am dropping with sleep, and very weak-minded in consequence."

"I will release you in two minutes. All you have to do is this. During my absence you will receive a further report from Gillman. If in it he says that Sir Geoffrey Heriot's influence over Mr. Irving still continues, and that the old gentleman declines to move in our matter without consulting his friend, you must find out Sir Geoffrey's address, and——"

"And let you know?"

"That will be impossible, dear boy, I shall be out of town."

"But you will leave your address?"

"Not exactly," said Mr. Delabole, playfully. "I don't want to be worried with business matters while I'm away. Other people want a little quiet as well as you, Master Philip. No, what you have to do is to find out Sir Geoffrey's address, and tell Gillman, whom, as far as regards that matter, I will place entirely at your disposal, to make himself acquainted with the old general's friends, mode of life, &c. He knows exactly what to do. Thus, all the preparation will be made and ready for me to work upon when I return to town."

"And if there is a necessity for seeing this old Sir What-you-call-him, who may live at the extremity of England, or on the Continent, or anywhere else, who will have to do that?"

"You, undoubtedly, my dear Philip. That appertains to the general manager's department, and I believe you receive the general manager's salary and perquisites."

"As at present arranged, certainly, but—but, however, we need not discuss the matter further, just now. You may depend upon my doing all that is necessary. Now, good-night and good-bye."

"Stay, let me see you to the door; the lock is awkward for those unaccustomed to it."

So saying, Mr. Delabole followed his guest down the staircase, and saw him safely into the street.

Returning to his room, the luxurious proprietor mixed himself a little cold brandy-and-water, lit a final cigarette, and commenced to moralise.

"Wonderfully clever man of the world, Asprey! What he said of our dear friend, who has just vacated that chair, that he 'could not stand beans,' is exactly and mathematically correct! Curzon-street and Mrs. Bendixen, and her sixty thousand pounds, have been too much for him! He means to kick over the traces, and he shows signs of it already. That was what he meant by his recent hesitation. When he has secured that prize, he thinks that he will be independent of me and of the Terra del Fuegos, and can hold or leave his position with us as it may happen to please him. Not so fast, Mr. Philip Vane, not quite so fast, if you please! There are such things as slips between cups and lips, and with those who have the opportunity of putting spokes in wheels rests the amount of progress to be achieved. Let me see what I can do in that capacity."

As he spoke he rose from his seat, flung the butt-end of his cigarette into the empty fireplace, and crossing the room, seated himself at a large old-fashioned writing-table. Opening one of the drawers, he took from it a memorandum-book, bound in leather, and secured with a lock. Opening this again with a gold key, hanging amidst a bunch of charms on his watch-chain, he turned over the leaves rapidly until he stopped at a certain page.

"There it is," he said, "my first and only essay in the detective profession, which, for an amateur, was decidedly successful. How wise I was not to trust to my memory for the detail, and how grateful I ought to be to old Wuff, that the casual reference to him and his travelling company, that morning at the club, should have been the means of giving me a tight hold over one of the most slippery but most useful tools ever yet fashioned for my hand! 'Miss Madge Pierrepont, leading lady, Wexter Theatre, Dobson, manager. Ultra-respectable, not a breath heard. Lodges with younger sister at Miss Cave's, box book-keeper in Crescent. Supposed to be spooned on by Gerald Hardinge, scene-painter at theatre. N.B. Nothing known of him, supposed to be swell out of luck. Tall woman, brown hair, large eyes, walks well.' Walks well! Lord, ah! I shall never forget the day that I walked after her and her sister from the theatre, when I wanted to take stock of her in the daylight, and how she looked me up and down when she found I was following them as though she were a princess! I didn't like that, I recollect; I found the

detective lay wasn't in my line, and left the rest of the clearing of it up to Gillman. Here is his report. 'Miss Madge Pierrepont, leading lady at the Chepstow Theatre, manager, W. Mew. Extract from the visitor's book of the Chepstow Castle Hotel: Arrivals, May the 17th,—Mund, Esquire, Mrs. and Mast., London; Wugg, Major, Southsea; Crumpsall, Mrs., Manchester; Vane, Captain, London. Extract from marriage-register in Chepstow parish church: July the 3rd. This is to certify, &c. Margaret Pierrepont, spinster; Philip Vane, bachelor. Witnesses, Thomas Black, fisherman; Helen Black, pew-opener.' That will do for my dear Philip, I think! That will prove a curb even for his restive temper. Not merely shall he do exactly what I require him, but through this 'information which I have received,' I shall be enabled to show him the best way of investing Mrs. Bendixen's sixty thousand pounds!"

MAIL DAY IN THE WEST.

BANG! It is a dull sound as of a cannon which wakes us out of our sleep on four bear-skins, under a blue blanket and an old coat, in our shanty, in Victoria, Vancouver's Island. We are as yet new to the ways of the place, and rub our eyes wondering what it can all mean. While we are cogitating we hear the scuttling of many feet along the wooden side-walk, and the companion who for the time being shares our mansion rushes in, dressing as he makes for the door, and tells us to "hurry up," for the mail is in. "Hurrying up" means in this case jumping into some clothes and a pair of boots, and joining the people who are now running from hither and thither down the quiet streets towards the harbour. It is yet early morning, but half the population seem to be up, and all running one way. The hotels, and many private and business houses, are flying flags. You also notice that though this is nominally a British town, fully one half of the colours are American. Our Transatlantic cousins are "great on bunting," and on high days, holidays, and on steamer day, are in no way backward to display the "goose and grid-iron" to the breeze. There is the mail steamer from San Francisco lying alongside the wooden wharf, blowing off steam, and already surrounded by draymen, black and white, all shouting, most of them swearing, and not a few of them with gold

watches in their sleeved-waistcoat pockets. Remember that we are in El Dorado. The chief citizens are also down deep in conference—three deep—with the purser, who, cigar in mouth, is busy with invoices and bills of lading, while here is paterfamilias, much excited and very hot, seeing to the landing of his wife and family, whom at last, having prepared a new home for them, he has brought away from struggling, overstocked England. They look very happy, but wondrously bewildered, at the new scenes around. And yonder is a sweet English girl, who has come all the way from fair Devon to pine-clad Vancouver, to wed the Bideford lad who has been toiling in the mines all these years for her; and as we see that brave lass escorted by the happy lover, and the brother who has come out with her, to the Hôtel de France, and thence to the little wooden church upon the hill, we feel certain that all the world looks bright to them, and all the mean-looking board houses gilded palaces.

There are also idlers like ourselves, seeing if any acquaintances have come, and what new girls have arrived for our colonial society. Here seems to be a popular man, who has just come out of the steamer. Half a dozen young fellows are round him, and he is laughing and shaking hands. He seems an old colonist, who has been away on a visit, and has returned again.

"Glad to see you, boys," we hear him saying, "mighty glad! Tell you what, the old country's not what we thought it, and I'm glad to be back from their small two-penny-halfpenny-wheelbarrow ways. I'm going to stick here, I tell you, and I guess you'd better all do the same!"

The incredulous, sad-looking smile on some of these young English faces, show that they don't half believe the enthusiastic returned colonist, and then we hear one say to the other, "Ah! it's all very well for Stephens, with his town lots and Cariboo claim; but I guess if I'd got his chance, you'd soon see the last of this child!" Nevertheless, they all go up and take a drink with the jubilant Stephens in old Ben Griffin's, at the Boomerang. There is already quite a brisk business going in that same way. "Ben's" seems to be the English house, and there the newly arrived Briton may, while quenching his thirst, indulge in the new arrival's amusement of cursing the "Yankees" to his heart's content, without any fear of ulterior consequences. It seems apparently

etiquette for the new arrivals and the old hands to go and "take a drink" before starting into the serious work of breakfast. Nobody has, however, much time for breakfast to-day. Even the lazy, the serenely lazy, Indians are now too excited to sit on the side-walks lazily watching the busy multitude of pale-faced strangers. Even they are down at the wharf acting as porters to the different hotels, for omnibuses and cabs are as yet unknown to Victoria. We get clear of the drags and trunk-laden Indians, and go up to the post-office, a little wooden building, which also does duty for the harbour-master's office; for the postmaster-general, being an old sea skipper, is made, by an economical legislature, to do duty also for captain of the port. The calls of the postmen, so familiar to us at home, are quite unknown on the Pacific. There everybody goes to the post-office for his own letters. Accordingly, by the time we have reached that building, merchants and merchants' clerks, or those who have boxes in the office, for which they pay a round sum per annum, are rushing for their "mail matter," as it is called. The general public has, however, the advantage of no such aristocratic luxury, and are now forming in line to wait their turn at the post-office window. The arrangement, from long custom, has become quite familiar to the heterogeneous mob who are waiting outside. Noiselessly, and without any nonsense, each new comer takes his turn at the end of the single file, until they stretch in a long tail up Wharf-street, or away towards the Hudson's Bay Company's warehouse. Now and then, indeed, some bumptious individual will attempt to step into the line out of his order, but he speedily becomes convinced of the little mistake he has made, as he is politely but simply handed back until, to his astonishment, he lands at the end of the line. If the mail arrives when the town is full of gold-diggers, it will sometimes be hours before the last of the tail can reach the head of the line, and though he need never attempt to go out of his place, it lies quite within his purpose to effect this either by love or money. It is not often that he attempts to do so by the former means; the latter comes more within the bounds of possibility. Accordingly, you will be sure to see in the line now and then some tall, gaunt, grey-shirted fellow who, you are perfectly certain, expects no letter, and who is in no great hurry. At a wink the

individual to whom a letter may be of importance, buys him off, and takes his place in the rank out of which he has stepped. In San Francisco, in the old roystering, money-scattering days, ten dollars have been often paid for this favour. At last we near the head of the line. There are still two before us, and we take our cue from them. Number one presents his head at the opening in the boarded window. "Bock, Hiram T.," this in a nasal accent. There is no mistaking his nationality. The postmaster-general is assisted by the deputy postmaster-general (we are fond of titles in the colonies), and both rapidly turn over the piles of letters arranged in the pigeon-holes, under the different letters of the alphabet. "Nothing!" and Hiram T. Bock, late of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, turns away, and cuts a chew of tobacco to console him for his disappointment. Number two is absorbed in some passing object, and requires a peremptory shout of "Next man!" to remind him that "the honourable gentleman" at the window requests his order. He darts forward and shouts, not in the half-whispering tone of some modest individuals, but after the manner of a freeborn Briton, "Smith!" "What Smith?" "John Smith!" A laugh comes from the inside, as the postmaster takes a peep out at his man, and asks, "What John Smith?" A little altercation ensues, which seems settled to their mutual satisfaction, for John Smith lays down three bits, about eightpence, for some partially paid letters, and moves off with "his mail." We come next, and so the line goes on. The newspapers are not distributed to-day. There is no time for that. The newspaper men are, however, in the room behind, looking over the pile on the floor for their "exchanges," and are, I dare say, not over particular in making use of any tempting periodical, even though their name should not be inscribed on it. People who so conscientiously send papers every mail to their colonial friends, may probably be interested to know that very few of them are ever received. I don't know what it may be in other colonies, but in Vancouver, when I knew it in the early days of the country, I never received one-half of those sent to me.

Perhaps it is only in the United States and in the British colony on the Pacific, that private individuals are allowed to compete with the government in carrying letters. These are called "express companies," and one or other has an office in

every place of any consequence all over the country. These express companies usually conduct a banking business, commission agency, and are also carriers of parcels—in fact, general factotums. The chief of these is Wells, Fargo, and Company, or, as they are familiarly called, "Wells Fargo." In every large town Wells Fargo's office is one of the best situated and most substantial buildings. If anybody is in difficulty about getting anything to or from any place, he goes to Wells Fargo. Nobody, so far as I am aware, ever saw either of the gentlemen so called; indeed, some profane individuals will not hesitate to hint that they are of the nature of two Mrs. Harrises, but, at all events, everybody knows their representatives. Many people, Americans especially, have a most enduring belief in them, and prefer to send all their letters by them rather than through the post-office, even though the former mode of conveyance is more expensive. All you have to do is to go to their office, buy one of their envelopes, put your letter in it, and then hand it over to them. You may be certain that it will be handed over to your correspondent as safely and, probably, more quickly than it would be if committed to the hands of the postal authorities. The agents of these express companies travel far and near, and often to places where there are no postal arrangements. Through the wildest part of the country you will meet their agents in canoes, on horseback, in stages, all bound on the same errand, carrying treasure, parcels, and letters. The mining population could scarcely exist without them, and have a most unwavering faith in them—I believe in every case well founded, for I have known very few things committed to their hands go astray. Though, perhaps, the mail coming to Victoria from England by Wells Fargo will be small compared with that by the legitimate channels, that leaving by them will be nearly as large, and to San Francisco probably larger. We step up accordingly to Wells Fargo's office in Yates-street to see if there are any letters for us there. The large room is full of people. The agent is standing upon the counter with a pile of letters, alphabetically arranged, in his hands, shouting out the different names, and tossing them hither and thither with an adroit spin, learned by long practice, in the direction of the applicant. The only person at all idle there on this busy day seems to be the captain of the steamer, who is sitting quietly in the sanctum of Wells Fargo

reading the colonial paper, and now and then nodding to his friends.

To-day you need never attempt to speak to any man on private business. Under ordinary circumstances anybody in Victoria must be terribly busy if he has not time to "take a drink," but to-day, unless it is in the way of business, nobody can spare time even for that, or do anything but read his letters, and write hasty answers to his correspondents. The colonial legislature by silent consent never think of meeting on mail day, and the Honourable John Jones must perforce postpone that great attempt to overthrow the government on the momentous subject of the Hog and Goat Bill, until he has written a smart note to Gingham, Cheatem, and Co., of Manchester, about the quality of that last invoice of long shirtings. Even Her Majesty's Courts of Justice must put off the trial of that Indian for murder until the mail is gone. The chief justice is, beside, too busy signing various legal papers to-day to attend to his ordinary judicial functions. The sheriff—and the functions of a colonial sheriff are more useful than ornamental—is very busy, for he knows, by long experience, that every mail day a number of gentlemen who may be in pecuniary trouble are apt to give their creditors the slip, and bid farewell for ever to an ungrateful colony. This intention comes to the sharp ears of their anxious friends in the way of business, and instantly these gentlemen rush over to the chief justice, and swear that to their certain knowledge such is the intention of the individual aforesaid. A *capias*, or, as it is familiarly known among those accustomed to it, "cap'us," is then issued, ordering and commanding the sheriff to see that So-and-so ne exeat regno—does not, in a word, skeddaddle to the loss of his mourning creditors. In the course of the afternoon the sheriff and his myrmidons may be seen hanging about the steamer armed with these bits of paper, and then between wanted and wanted there is a fine trial of skill, and not unfrequently, by a display of careless nonchalance, the victim slips from under the watchful fingers of the legal functionary. On mail day bills become due, and as everybody has his bills to meet on that day, everybody expects everybody else to pay what he is due. But of course, as always happens in this case, he very often reckons without his host. Accordingly, the steamer gun is often the signal for gentlemen who "have something out" to have a particular engagement in the country until the mail

has gone. In San Francisco, before the steamer day was superseded by the Pacific Railroad, this necessity of making up bills against steamer day gave rise to a peculiar set of men, who made a business of lending money "from steamer day to steamer day," the rate for the ten days or a fortnight being from one to two per cent, almost invariably, too, with "collateral security," that is, a deposit receipt of merchandise in a warehouse, or some such easily made over document. This was rather exorbitant, even in a country where the ordinary interest on money, with the best security, is eighteen per cent per annum. But then at no time in California has it been looked upon as a disgrace either to lend or to borrow money at the highest rates of interest, and the "from steamer day to steamer day" money lenders grew rich.

The newspaper offices are full, for the different local prints issue a special edition for steamer day, containing a summary of the last ten days' or two weeks' news, and people are busily buying these at one shilling apiece, in the sanguine hope, not destroyed by many failures, that they will reach the consignees. As we pass down by the post-office again, most of the town people have received their letters, but the settlers from the immediately outlying districts have begun to come in in waggons, on horseback, or on foot. You notice that nearly all of these people, though roughly dressed, are yet of quite a different style from our familiar agricultural labourer. Most of them have an air of intelligence, and several are quite refined in appearance, manners, and language. For months these men have been shut out from all news from home. Some have just come down from the mines, and you can see by the look of them have been unsuccessful. Others are "pulling through the winter" as best they can, hunting, working on farms, or living from hand to mouth until the snow clears off the mountains, and they can start off to try their luck in the gold-fields once more. Some, as they receive their letters, cram them into their pockets, and move away to some quiet place to read them, while others, all careless of the throng, move along Wharf-street and up Bastion-street, diligently perusing the long-expected letter. Another will comfortably sit down on the edge of the wooden side-walk with his feet in the gutter, and, heedless of passers-by, peruse his correspondence from beginning to end. A nervously excited man will open his letter, peep into it, and

then rush off to devour it in the quiet corner of some neighbouring saloon, and now and then you will see an anxious face, and notice often a tearful eye glancing at a deep black-edged envelope, which tells that for the far-off colonist one more link which bound him to the mother country has been severed.

As the hour for the mail sailing approaches, the whole town gets into a fever of excitement; and when the whistle begins to blow in a spasmodically shrieking manner, and the black clouds of smoke, which tell that steam is getting up, darken the air, you would suppose that the end of the world (colonial) was approaching. Here a returning colonist, surrounded by a knot of envious friends, and with an air of pity on his face for us who are remaining, is rushing down to the steamer, or hastily taking a farewell drink before shaking the colonial dust off his colonial highlows, while every other man seems to be rushing with a letter for somebody to post in San Francisco, having been too late for the mail. At last the steamer begins to ease off, then the crowd give a cheer or two, which is returned with interest from the crowded deck of the steamer. Steady! and she is round the arbutus-covered point by the Indian village, the crowd turn off, and once more we Vancouverites are left to ourselves, and mail day is over for the next fortnight. The weary postmaster goes home to dinner, the merchant and the merchants' clerks wend their way home, and everybody retires early to bed, to sleep or not to sleep, as the fortunes of the day may have brought him good or bad news. Only the day's work is not over for the newspaper men. A hasty dinner over, the colonial sub-editors, after paying a visit to the "Occidental Bar," grind up the editorial scissors, and set to work to get up the summary of European news, while perhaps an idle friend may look over the exchanges and make up their foreign correspondence in Vienna, Paris, and St. Petersburg, with a tolerable amount of local colouring derived from experience or Murray's Guide Book. Next day the night's work will appear pretty well put together, with lists of the passengers, the imports and exports, the amount of gold-dust despatched by each banking-house, and a variety of notices headed "Personal." These note that "we are glad to see" that such and such a distinguished citizen "has again arrived home, and looking well after his visit to Europe," or that such and such another citizen, also distinguished after a fashion,

d, to the regret of his numerous creditors, managed to elude the active and vigilant sheriff. Then follow a list of acknowledgments: "To the gentlemanly and obliging master of the steamer Brother Jonathan for the San Francisco papers," or to "our eminent citizen, Honourable Donald Macnald, who has just arrived from a prolonged visit to Canada, for late Dominion changes." In a few days things settle down to their ordinary dead level. The gentlemen "wanted" get at their ease again, while the citizens who had "something out" turn again to town, of course terribly shocked to hear that the mail has been indeed gone. Until the great mail day arrives again the even tenour of the mercantile days is undisturbed except by the arrival of a few local mails up river, or long fast local steamers, smacks, and trading schooners, or by the more primitive method of an Indian canoe. I can remember when this latter method was the only postal convenience in the country, but that was when the Honourable the Hudson's Bay Company reigned supreme over these territories. At that time the only civilised spots through this immense tract of country were the forts of the great fur traders. When the officer in charge of one of these lonely outposts wished to send a letter to another fort, he merely sought out an Indian, wrapped the letter well up in a piece of oil-cloth, and despatched him. There was a stated rate of remuneration, according to the season of the year, for his service, and this every Indian knew. Accordingly, the aboriginal courier might go the whole way and receive the whole reward, or—what was much more likely—he might not have his way all clear before him, and prudently stop as long as his skin was whole. In that case he sold the letter to another Indian for a proportion of the reward, according to the distance yet to be gone over. To the company it was quite the same, for eventually the letter reached its destination in perfect safety, when the full payment was claimed by the contractor or the last division of the route traversed. In those days the one annual ship to Fort Vancouver took about twelve months on the passage from England. It halted to take in wine at Madeira, spices at Rio, cattle at the Falklands, at Valparaiso to water, at the Sandwich Islands to trade tortoise-shell, at San Francisco to do business with Don Castro—all before the run from Astoria reported that she had passed the bar of the Columbia River.

Then she went to Canton and sold her sea otters to the mandarins, and bought nankeens, teas, and silks, and so made the round voyage. Accordingly, the company adopted another method to get their letters home and the rarer furs quicker to England. Every year the fur brigade crossed the whole breadth of the American continent on foot, on horseback, in birch-bark canoes, and in batteaus to York Factory, in Hudson's Bay. The accountant of the company then soldered up the papers in a shining tin box, which he strapped on his back, and so Fort York or Moose Factory, as the case might be, on the shores of the frozen sea, was reached in about five months. These were the primitive days of the postal system in the Far West. We thought we had got an immense advance when the pony express carried the letters by relays of fearless riders over the plains to the furthest west railway station, and from there returning to Sacramento, in California.

I can well remember the steamer lying puffing at the wharf at Sacramento until clatter! clatter! the last pony rider, a rough, hardy, wiry fellow, armed cap-à-pie, galloped on board with the mails from "St. Joe's" (Saint Joseph), in Missouri, apologising to the little knot that gathered round him by the funnel for keeping them waiting, by relating (as he lit a cigar) that "a mile or a mile and a half on this side of Brown's Hole, down by the sulphur spring, Joram Hicks, the pony rider, had got his har lifted by Pal-utes, and it was 'nation time, boys, afore the stock could be got up, and the bags ketched from the critters and sent on!" And the speaker goes off as unconcerned as if he was relating the most trivial incident in the world. But it was a very trivial incident in those days, for one who did business on the great prairies to lose his scalp between sunrise and sunset. Then came the stage-coaches, and everybody thought the end of the world could not be far off, when you could, by travelling day and night, and getting the life almost shaken out of you amid a cloud of dust, go from Virginia City to Omaha in seven or eight days. Now you can go from New York to Sacramento, in luxurious carriages, in less than that time. Still the stage-coach is, and will long be, an institution in many parts of the West, both for passengers and mails. There is one such going between Portland, in Oregon, and Marysville, in California. In the winter it has to be ferried over swollen rivers on rafts, and

often, when crossing prairies which are flooded until they look like some great lake, the passenger is suddenly aware that the coach is floating, and that if he doesn't look sharp he'll be drowned like a rat in its hole. How long it takes I would be afraid to risk even a conjecture. Rumours are extant of a too confiding person having died of old age on the road! Even after the coach began to run, mail day was still an institution in San Francisco, only a limited mail being conveyed across the plains. Then, among other things, the Eastern (U.S.) papers always sold for a shilling (twenty-five cents, or two bits) apiece. Somehow or other the mail used to manage nine times out of ten to come in after dark, and often at very unseasonable hours. Often when coming home from a most jovial party at an early hour in the morning, the quiet streets would resound with the yells of the newsboy (and a California newsboy is the sharpest of his race), "Pa—nama st'm'r in. Noo Yor—k Herald, Tri—bunc, World. Here you are, sir! two bits!" and he was off again to intercept some other reveller on the opposite side of the street. You hurried home, lit your lamp, and prepared to enjoy your New York Herald, when, as you unfolded it, a sort of suspicion began to steal over you that there must be some mistake. The paper was a year old! Then as you dashed it aside, you recollected that this was the 1st of April, and that you were—sold!

In addition to all these methods, a good number of letters in the most out-of-the-way places in the Far West are carried by private hands. There are localities so remote, that even the stage-coach is not heard of, and the express-man does not find it worth his while to reach them. Letters from such places are few and far between. There is a fur trading post in the northern part of British Columbia which is only communicated with once in two years. There are also distant knots of gold-diggers in some secluded mountain valley, washing the sands of a nameless stream, who might quietly slip out of men's memories, did they depend upon government reaching them with their letters. Luckily, however, the digger of the auriferous soil is not much addicted to epistolary correspondence, and what he does find it necessary to indite he manages to get conveyed to the coast somehow or other. If you have anything like an extensive acquaintance in one of these gold-digging regions, you may be astonished some autumn day to find your

door in Victoria opened in a free-and-easy way, and to see a booted, grey-shirted individual walk into the nearest apartment. Then, as he begins to search his pockets for something, he introduces himself: "Name o' Smith, Mister? Guessed so. Mine's Job. 'Job,' sez he to me, 'Job, I calc'late I'll put off a line to Mister Smith down to Victory,' sez he to me. 'Easy know him,' sez he. 'Ain't much to look at, but a good un to go'—darn't ef I ain't lost it!" With this the honest minor stands open-mouthed, until, finally, a brilliant idea strikes him, and with a self-satisfied slap he throws down on the table a greasy document, which he produces from the lining of his hat, and which you find has been about five months on the way, while the amateur postman has been "prospecting" in and about the Rocky Mountains enough to merit the Geographical Society's fellowship.

And so by drops and driblets "mail matter" trickles in to moisten our letter-thirsty souls in the Far West, until—too quick for the man whose bill is then due, too slow for everybody else—the days roll round, and with a hurry and a scurry, a running hither and thither, mail day again comes round to your brothers in the West.

FIRE AND RAIN.

AFTER reading aloud at the breakfast table the first telegraphic announcements of the terrific fire at Chicago, I turned to my wife and said: "There will be heavy rains at Chicago after this. Just look into the papers to-morrow or next day, and you will see that I have been a true prophet."

"Prophecy! bah!" replied my wife, with an absence of that reverence for my high pretensions which neither wives nor valets de chambre feel for the genius, the greatness, or the wisdom of their lords or masters. "No one can prophesy now-a-days, not even Zadkiel, or the author of Moore's Almanack. Modern prophets are all impostors and humbugs."

"You are right, though you use strong language," I replied; "but if we cannot prophesy, we can predict and calculate. We can tell to a minute when there will be an eclipse of the sun or moon, next year or ten years hence; and we know to a certainty when a comet will re-appear on the horizon; so I do not prophesy. I predict, or rather I calculate, that this terrible fire will be followed by a heavy down-pour of rain upon Chicago."

I had not to wait long for the verification of my forecast, for in the morning papers of the next day, the 11th of October, Reuter's telegrams from New York, dated the previous evening, contained the following: "Advices from Chicago, dated midnight, state that the fire continued raging. The wind is violent and changing, and spreads the flames in all directions. Two-thirds of the city have been destroyed. One hundred thousand of the inhabitants are houseless and starving. The conflagration raged until an early hour this morning, *when a heavy rain fell* and extinguished the flames."

There was a slight, a very slight degree of triumph in my looks and in the tone of my voice as I read this aloud. My wife, with something of the spirit of St. Thomas, or Bishop Colenso, about her, was not content to accept my reading as proof positive that I had not invented the passage to hoax and mystify her, and requested me to hand her the paper. I did so, and she read the passage for herself. She straightway began to question me, for she has an inquiring as well as an incredulous mind, on the how, the why, and the wherefore of great rains after great fires. The information I gave her may be interesting to those who, as the late Lord Derby said of himself, "were born in a pre-scientific age," or who, having been born in a scientific period, have been too busy, too careless, or too unprovided with opportunity, to study the great phenomena of nature.

The atmosphere surrounding the earth contains, as everybody knows, a certain quantity of humidity or watery vapour, supplied by evaporation from the ocean; which is either held in invisible solution in the upper air, or collected visibly in clouds, when it descends in cold weather in the shape of hail and snow, or in warmer weather as rain. When a wide column of air (such for instance as a column of air coextensive with the circumference of a large city) is from any cause more greatly heated than the circumambient atmosphere, it begins, in consequence of the diminution of its specific gravity, to ascend into space. The colder air immediately rushes in from all points of the compass to fill up the vacuum, and coming in contact with the heat below, precipitates in rain the moisture which it previously held in solution. Thus the winds that blew so furiously over the unhappy city of Chicago, and the rain that fell in such copious torrents, were alike produced by the immensity of the conflagration. It has often been remarked

by historians and philosophers that great battles by sea and land are invariably followed or interrupted by heavy rains. It was not so in ancient times when men fought hand to hand with sword and spear, and armies discharged their arrows at each other; but when vast quantities of gunpowder are exploded, either at sea or on shore, and great heat generated over a large space occupied by the combatants, the rain descends with the certainty of cause and effect.

In like manner, and for a similar reason, rain in such great and populous cities as London, Manchester, and Glasgow, is always more frequent and more copious than in the rural districts twenty or thirty miles beyond. The thousands and tens of thousands of chimneys of dwelling-houses—and the taller chimneys of factories—that pour not only smoke but heat into the atmosphere, produce the rain, from which the more sparsely peopled villages and towns, beyond the reach of the too abundant caloric, are comparatively free. The tall chimneys of cotton-mills, foundries, and other factories with which most of our largest cities abound, act on a smaller scale the part played by mountains in the economy of nature. The mountain tops receive and discharge electricity, and the electricity precipitates from the clouds the moisture which they contain.

It has sometimes been asserted that the ancients were imperfectly, or not at all, acquainted with the constitution of the atmosphere, and that Descartes was the first natural philosopher who threw any real light upon the subject. The moderns, however much they may have distanced the ancients in their study of nature, are apt to overvalue their own achievements, and undervalue those of the early fathers of the world. The difference between ancient and modern knowledge may not be so great as we in our vain-gloriousness imagine. One difference, however, there assuredly is. In our day knowledge is freely communicated to the whole people. In the ancient day knowledge was jealously confined within the circle of the priesthood. The priests of Assyria and Egypt, and of nations that were great and highly civilised before the birth of Abraham, were by no means ignorant. They may have been impostors, but they were not fools, and used their knowledge to deceive the people, and keep them in subjection. They wrought apparent miracles by scientific means, and rigidly excluded laymen, even though these might be

kings and conquerors, from participating in their secrets. And this brings me to the ancient story of Nimrod—the mighty hunter and king of Babel—who built a tower upon the plains of Shinar.

The literal truth of this ancient myth is no longer insisted upon by theologians; but like all myths it must have a meaning, if we could but discover it. The learned Eichhorn is of opinion that the story expresses, in a mythical form, the fact that originally the human race formed one family or nation; that they began to build a city and a tower; that in the progress of the work they quarrelled among each other; that they then separated, and that from their separation proceeded in course of time all the languages of the earth. But another interpretation suggests itself, which may or may not be correct, but which at all events seems to be worthy of discussion, if the literal truth of the legend as a portion of authentic history be no longer insisted upon.

The nature of the climate in Shinar is such, the heat is so great, the drought so excessive, that its soil is unproductive without the aid of artificial irrigation. So Herodotus told the world in his day. Bearing this in mind, as well as the obviously mythological character of a story that represents the Almighty as being afraid that man could really build an edifice to reach to heaven, unless extraordinary means were taken to frustrate the daring design, may we not ask whether Nimrod may not have been a philosopher as well as a king and a hunter? May he not have intended to build a mighty tower—not up to heaven—but high above the clouds? And may not his purpose have been to maintain enormous fires upon the top, night and day, during certain seasons of the year? And if he had succeeded in this purpose would not the fire upon the top of the tall tower have brought down the fruitful rain upon the barren plain of Shinar? And if Nimrod was a learned layman, would not the priesthood be jealous of his interference in a matter of science, which the priests of the early ages considered to belong exclusively to them? And if being jealous and indignant at his sacrilegious conduct, would they not endeavour to stir up the anger of the people against him, by expatiating on the horrible impiety of his design? And if they succeeded in exciting tumults and insurrections amongst the workpeople, and a consequent abandonment of the work, would not this result be properly enough described as a confusion of tongues? In

those days an offence against the priesthood was an offence against God, as may be seen not only in this supposititious story of Nimrod, but in the cognate story of Prometheus, who stole the fire from heaven, and incurred the relentless enmity of the gods for the benefits he conferred upon man.

All these considerations, and speculations, and surmises having been duly communicated to the fair partner of my joys and sorrows, she expressed her opinion on the matter by informing me that they were like the shake of Lord Burleigh's head in the play, and that there might, for all she knew to the contrary, be something in them.

SHE AND I.

WHY do I love my love so well?

Why is she all in all to me?

I try to tell, I cannot tell,

It still remains a mystery:

And why to her I am so dear

I cannot tell although I try,

Unless I find both answers here:

She is herself and I am I.

Her face is very sweet to me,

Her eyes beam tenderly on mine;

But can I say I never see

Face fairer, eyes that brighter shine?

This thing I surely cannot say

If I speak truth and do not lie;

Yet here I am in love to-day,

For she's herself and I am I.

It cannot be that I fulfil

Completely all her girlish dreams,

For far beyond my real still

Her old ideal surely gleams;

And yet I know her love is mine,

A flowing spring that cannot dry,

What explanation? This, in fine:

She is herself and I am I.

Mid all the cords by which fond hearts

Are drawn together into one,

This is a cord which never parts,

But strengthens as the years roll on;

And though, as seasons hurry past,

Grace, beauty, wit, and genius die,

Till the last hour this charm will last:

She is herself and I am I.

She is herself and I am I,

Now, henceforth, ever more the same,

Till the dark angel draweth nigh

And calleth her and me by name.

Yea, after Death has done his worst,

Each risen soul will straightway fly

To meet the other. As at first

She'll be herself, I shall be I.

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

BLACKFRIARS.

ON the river-side between St. Paul's and Whitefriars there stood, in the Middle Ages, three Norman fortresses. Castle Baynard and the old Tower of Mountfiquet, now Bridewell, were two of these. Baynard Castle, granted to the Earls of Clare, and afterwards rebuilt by Humphrey, Duke of

Gloucester, was the palace in which the Duke of Buckingham offered the crown to his wily confederate, Richard the Crook-back. In Elizabeth's time it was granted to the Earls of Pembroke, who lived there in splendour till the Great Fire melted their gold, calcined their jewels, and drove them in the fashionable flood that was already moving westward. Mountfiquet Castle was pulled down in 1276, when Hubert de Bergh, Earl of Kent, transplanted a colony of Black Dominican Friars from Holborn, near Lincoln's Inn, to the river-side south of Ludgate-hill. Yet so conservative is even Time in England, that a recent correspondent of Notes and Queries points out a piece of mediæval walling, and the fragment of a buttress, still standing, at the foot of the Times office in Printing House-square, which seem to have formed part of the stronghold of the Mountfiquets. This interesting relic is on the left hand of Queen Victoria-street, going up from the bridge, just where there formerly was a picturesque but dangerous descent by a flight of break-neck stone steps. At the right-hand side of the same street stands an old rubble chalk wall, even older. It is just past the new house of the Bible Society, and seems to have been part of the old City wall which at first ended at Baynard Castle. The rampart advanced to Mountfiquet, and lastly, to please and protect the Dominicans, was pushed forward outside Ludgate to the Fleet, which served as a moat, the Old Bailey being an advanced work.

King Edward the First and Queen Eleanor heaped many gifts on the sable friars. Charles the Fifth was lodged at their monastery when he visited England, and his nobles resided in Henry's new-built palace of Bridewell, a gallery being thrown over the Fleet and driven through the City wall to serve as a communication between the two mansions. Henry held the "Black Parliament" in this monastery, and here Cardinal Campeggio presided at the trial which ended with the tyrant's divorce from the ill-used Katherine of Arragon. In the same house the parliament also sat that condemned Wolsey, and sent him to beg "a little earth for charity" of the monks of Leicester. The rapacious king laid his rough hand on the treasures of the house in 1538, and Edward the Sixth sold the Hall and Prior's Lodgings to Sir Francis Bryan, a courtier, afterwards granting Sir Francis Cawarden, master of the revels, the whole house and precincts of the

Preacher Friars, the yearly value being then reckoned at nineteen pounds: The holy brothers were dispersed to beg or thieve, and the church was pulled down, but the mischievous right of sanctuary continued.

And now we come to the event that connects the old monastic ground with the name of the great genius of England. James Burbage, Shakespeare's friend and fellow-actor, and other servants of the Earl of Leicester, tormented out of the City by the angry edicts of over-scrupulous lord mayors, took shelter in the precinct, and there, in 1578, erected a play-house (Play-house-yard). Every attempt was in vain made to crush the intruders. About the year 1586, according to the best authorities, the young Shakespeare came to London and joined the company at the Blackfriars Theatre. Only three years later we find the new arrival (and this is one of the unsolvable mysteries of Shakespeare's life) one of sixteen sharers in the prosperous though persecuted theatre. It is true that Mr. Halliwell has lately discovered that he was not exactly a proprietor, but only an actor receiving a share of the profits of the house, exclusive of the galleries (the boxes and dress circle of those days), but this is after all only a lessening of the difficulty, and it is almost as remarkable that a young unknown Warwickshire poet should receive such profits, as it is that he should have held a sixteenth of the whole property. Without the generous patronage of some such patron as the Earl of Southampton or Lord Brooke, how could the young actor have moved? He was twenty-six, and may have written *Venus and Adonis* or *Lucrece*, yet the first of these poems was not published till 1593. He may have already adapted one or two tolerably successful historical plays, and, as Mr. Collier thinks, might have written the *Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour Lost*, or the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. One thing is certain, that in 1587 five companies of players, including the Blackfriars company, performed at Stratford, and in his native town Mr. Collier thinks Shakespeare first proved himself useful to his new comrades.

In 1589 the lord mayor closed two theatres for ridiculing the Puritans. Burbage and his friends, alarmed at this, petitioned the privy council, and pleaded that they had never introduced into their plays matters of state or religion. The Blackfriars company, in 1593, began to build a summer theatre, the Globe, in Southwark; and Mr. Collier, remembering that this was the very

year *Venus and Adonis* was published, attributes some great gift of the earl to Shakespeare to have immediately followed this poem, which was dedicated to Southampton. That money may have gone to build the Globe. By 1594, the poet had written *Richard the Second* and *Richard the Third*, and must have been recognised as a great writer. In 1596, we find Shakespeare and his partners (only eight now) petitioning the privy council to allow them to repair and enlarge their theatre, which the Puritans of Blackfriars wanted to close. The council allowed the repairs, but forbade the enlargement. At this time Shakespeare was living near the Bear Garden, Southwark, to be close to the Globe. He was now evidently a thriving, "warm" man, for, in 1597, he bought for sixty pounds New Place, one of the best houses in Stratford. In 1613, we find Shakespeare purchasing a plot of ground not far from Blackfriars Theatre, and abutting upon a street leading down to Puddle Wharf, "right against the king's majesty's wardrobe;" but he had retired to Stratford, and given up London and the stage before this. The deed of this sale was sold in 1841 for one hundred and sixty-two pounds five shillings.

In 1608, the lord mayor and aldermen of London made a final attempt to crush the Blackfriars players, but failing to prove to the Lord Chancellor that the City had ever exercised any authority within the precinct and liberty of Blackfriars, their cause fell to the ground. The corporation then opened a negotiation for purchase with Burbage, Shakespeare, and the other (now nine) shareholders. The players asked about seven thousand pounds, Shakespeare's four shares being valued at one thousand four hundred and thirty-three pounds six shillings and eightpence, including the wardrobe and properties, estimated at five hundred pounds. His income at this time Mr. Collier estimates at four hundred a year. The Blackfriars Theatre was pulled down in Cromwell's time, 1655, and houses built in its room.

Randolph, the dramatist, a pupil of Ben Jonson's, ridicules in the *Muses' Looking-Glass*, that strange "morality" play of his, the Puritan feather-sellers of Blackfriars, whom Ben Jonson also taunts, and Randolph's pretty Puritan, Mrs. Flowerdew, says of the ungodly of Blackfriars:

Indeed, it sometimes pricks my conscience,
I come to sell 'em pins and looking-glasses.

To which her friend, Mr. Bird, replies with the sly sanctity of *Tartuffe*:

I have this custom, too, for my feathers,
'Tis fit that we which are sincere professors
Should gain by infidels.

Ben Jonson, that smiter at all such hypocrites, wrote *Volpone* at his house in Blackfriars, and here he laid the scene of the *Alchemist*. The Friars were fashionable, in spite of the players, for Vandyck lived in the precinct for nine years, till his death in 1641, and the wicked Earl and Countess of Somerset resided in the same locality when they poisoned their former favourite, Sir Thomas Overbury; as late as 1735, Mr. Peter Cunningham says, there was an attempt to assert precinct privileges, but years before sheriffs arrested in the Friars.

In 1623, Blackfriars was the scene of a most fatal and extraordinary accident. It occurred in the chief house of the Friary, then a district declining fast in respectability. Hunsdon House derived its name from Queen Elizabeth's favourite cousin, the Lord Chamberlain, Henry Carey, Baron Hunsdon, and was at the time occupied by Count de Tillier, the French ambassador. About three o'clock on Sunday, October the 26th, a large Roman Catholic congregation of about three hundred persons, worshipping to a certain degree in stealth, and not without fear from the Puritan feather makers of the theatrical neighbourhood, had assembled in a long garret in the third and uppermost story. Master Drury, a Jesuit prelate of celebrity, had drawn together this crowd of timid people. The garret looking over the gatehouse was approached by a passage with a door opening into the street, and also by a passage from the ambassador's withdrawing-room. The garret was about seventeen feet wide and forty feet long, with a vestry for a priest partitioned off at one end. In the middle of the garret and near the wall stood a raised table and chair for the preacher. The gentry sat on chairs and stools facing the pulpit, the rest stood behind, crowding as far as the head of the stairs. At the appointed hour Master Drury, the priest, came from the inner room in white robe and scarlet stole, an attendant carrying a book and the hour-glass by which to measure his sermon. He knelt down at the chair for about an Ave Maria, but uttered no audible prayer. He then took the Jesuit's Testament, and read for the text the Gospel for the day, which was, according to the Gregorian calendar, the twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost: "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven like unto a man being a king that

would make an account of his servants. And when he began to make account there was one presented unto him that owed him ten thousand talents." Having read the text the Jesuit preacher sat down, and putting on his head a red quilt cap with a white linen one beneath it, commenced his sermon. He had spoken for about half an hour, when the calamity happened. The great weight of the crowd in the old room suddenly snapped the main dormer beam of the floor, which instantly crashed in and fell into the room below. The main beams there also snapped and broke through to the ambassador's drawing-room over the gatehouse, a distance of two-and-twenty feet. Only a part, however, of the gallery floor, immediately over Father Rudgate's chamber, a small room used for secret mass, gave way. The rest of the floor being less crowded, stood firm, and the people on it having no other means of escape, drew their knives and cut a way through a plaster wall into a neighbouring room.

A contemporary pamphleteer, who visited the ruins and wrote fresh from the first outburst of sympathy, says: "What ear without tingling can bear the doleful and confused cries of such a troop of men, women, and children all falling suddenly in the same pit, and apprehending with one horror the same ruin? What eye can behold without inundation of tears such a spectacle of men overwhelmed with breaches of weighty timber, buried in rubbish and smothered with dust? What heart without evaporating in sighs can ponder the burden of deepest sorrows and lamentations of parents, children, husbands, wives, kinsmen, friends, for their dearest pledges and chiefest comforts? This world all bereft and swept away with one blast of the same dismal tempest."

The news of the accident fast echoing through London, Serjeant Finch, the recorder, and the lord mayor and aldermen, at once provided for the safety of the ambassador's family, who were naturally shaking in their shoes, and shutting up the gates to keep off the curious and thievish crowd, set guards at all the Blackfriars passages. Workmen were instantly employed in gangs to remove the débris and rescue the sufferers, who were still alive.

The pamphleteer, again rousing himself to the occasion, and turning on his tears, says: "At the opening hereof what a chaos! what fearful objects! what lamentable representations! Here some

buried, some dismembered, some only parts of men; here some wounded, and weltering in their own and other's blood; others putting forth their fainting hands, and crying out for help. Here some gasping and panting for breath; others stifled for want of air. So the most of them being thus covered with dust, their death was a kind of burial." All that night and part of the next day the workmen spent in removing the bodies, and the inquest was then held. It was found that the main beams were only ten inches square, and had two mortise holes, where the girders were inserted, facing each other, so that only three inches of solid timber were left. The main beam of the lower room, about thirteen inches square, without mortise holes, broke obliquely near the end. No wall gave way, and the roof and ceiling of the garret remained entire. Father Drury perished, as also did Father Rudgate, who was in his own room below. Lady Webb, of Southwark, Lady Blackstone's daughter from Scroope's-court, Mr. Fowell, a Warwickshire gentleman, and many tradesmen, servants, and artisans—ninety-five in all—perished. Some of the escapes seemed almost miraculous. Mistress Lucie Penruddock fell between Lady Webb and a servant, who were both killed, yet was saved by her chair falling over her head. Lady Webb's daughter was found alive near her dead mother; and a girl named Elizabeth Sanders was also saved by the dead who fell and covered her. A Protestant scholar, though one of the very undermost, escaped by the timbers arching over him, and some of them slanting against the wall. He tore a way out through the laths of the ceiling by main strength, then crept between two joists to a hole where he saw light, and was drawn through a door by one of the ambassador's family. He at once returned to rescue others. There was a girl of ten who cried to him, "Oh, my mother! oh, my sister! They are down under the timber." He told her to be patient, and by God's grace they would be quickly got forth. The child replied, "This will be a great scandal to our religion." One of the men that fell said to a fellow-sufferer, "Oh, what advantage our adversaries will take at this!" The other replied, "If it be God's will this should befall us, what can we say to it?" One gentleman was saved by keeping near the stairs, while his friend, who had pushed near the pulpit, perished. Many of those who were saved died in a

few hours after their extrication. The bodies of Lady Webb, Mistress Udale, and Lady Blackstone's daughter were carried to Ely House, Holborn, and there buried in the back court-yard. In the fore court-yard, by the French ambassador's house, a huge grave, eighteen feet long and twelve feet broad, was dug, and four-and-forty corpses piled within it. In another pit, twelve feet long and eight feet broad, in the ambassador's garden, they buried fifteen more. Others were interred in St. Andrew's, St. Bride's, and Blackfriars churches. The list of the killed and wounded is curious, from its topographical allusions. Amongst other entries we find John Halifax, a water-bearer (in the old times of street conduits the London water-bearer was an important person), a son of Mr. Flood, the scrivener, in Holborn, a man of Sir Ives Pemberton, Thomas Brisket, his wife, son, and maid, in Montague Close, Richard Fitzgarret, of Gray's Inn, gentleman, Davie, an Irishman, in Angell-alley, Gray's Inn, gentleman, Sarah Watson, daughter of Master Watson, surgeon, Master Grimes, near the Horse Shoe tavern, in Drury-lane, John Bevans, at the Seven Stars, in Drury-lane, Francis Man, Thieving-lane, Westminster, &c. As might have been expected, the fanatics of both parties had much to say about this terrible accident. The Catholics declared that the Protestants, knowing this to be a chief place of meeting for men of their faith, had secretly drawn out the pins or sawn the supporting timbers partly asunder. The Protestants, on the other hand, lustily declared that the planks would not bear such a weight of Romanish sin, and that God was displeased with their pulpits and altars, their doctrine and sacrifice; one zealot remembered that at the return of Prince Charles from the madcap expedition to Spain, a Catholic had lamented, or was said to have lamented, the street bonfires, as there would be never a fagot left to burn the heretics. If it had been a Protestant chapel, the Puritans cried, the Jesuits would have called the calamity an omen of the speedy downfall of heresy. A Catholic writer replied "with a word of comfort," and pronounced the accident to be a presage of good fortune to Catholics, and of the overthrow of error and heresy. This zealous, but not well-informed writer compared Father Drury's death to that of Zuinglius, who fell in battle, and with that of Calvin, "who, being in despair, and calling upon the devil, gave up his wicked

soul, swearing, cursing, and blaspheming." So intolerance, we see, is neither specially Protestant nor Catholic, but of every party. "The fatal vespers," as that terrible day at Blackfriars was afterwards called, were long remembered with a shudder by Catholic England.

The Blackfriars Bridge, pulled down a few years since, was begun in 1760, made passable as a bridle-way in 1768, and first opened on Sunday, November the 19th, 1769. It was built from the design of Robert Mylne, a clever young Scotch engineer, whose family had been master-masons to the kings of Scotland for five hundred years. Mylne had just returned from a professional tour in Italy, where he had followed the footsteps of Vitruvius, and gained the first prize at the Academy of St. Luke, when he arrived in London friendless and unknown, and entered into competition with twenty other architects for the new bridge. Among these rivals was Smeaton, the great engineer, a protégé of Lord Bute's, and Doctor Johnson's friend Gwynn, well known for his admirable work on London improvements. The committee were, however, just enough to be unanimous in favouring the unknown young Scotchman, and he carried off the prize. Directly it was known that Mylne's arches were to be elliptical, every one unacquainted with the subject began to write in favour of the semicircular arch. Among the champions, Doctor Johnson was, if not the most ignorant, certainly the most rash. He wrote three letters to the printer of the Gazetteer, praising Gwynn's plans, and denouncing the Scotch conqueror. Gwynn had "coached" the learned doctor in a very unsatisfactory way. In his early days the giant of Bolt-court had been accustomed to get up subjects rapidly, but the science of architecture was not so easily digested. The doctor contended "that the first excellence of a bridge built for commerce over a large river is strength." So far so good, but he then went on to try and show that the pointed arch is necessarily weak; and here he himself broke down. He allowed that there was an elliptical bridge at Florence, but he said carts were not allowed to go over it, which proved its fragility. He also condemned a proposed cast-iron parapet, in imitation of one at Rome, as too poor and trifling for a great design. He allowed that a certain arch of Perrault's was elliptical, but then he contended that it had to be held together by iron clamps. He allowed that Mr. Mylne

had gained the prize at Rome, but the competitors, the arrogant despot of London clubs asserted, were only boys, and, moreover, architecture had sunk so low at Rome that even the Pantheon had been deformed by petty decorations. In his third letter the doctor grew more scientific, and even more confused. He was very angry with Mr. Mylne's friends for asserting that, though a semi-ellipsis might be weaker than a semicircle, it had quite strength enough to support a bridge. "I again venture to declare," he wrote—"I again venture to declare, in defiance of all this contemptuous superiority" (how arrogant men hate other people's arrogance!), "that a straight line will bear no weight; not even the science of Vasari can make that form strong which the laws of nature have condemned to weakness. By the position that a straight line will bear nothing is meant that it receives no strength from straightness; for that many bodies laid in straight lines will support weight by the cohesion of their parts every one has found who has seen dishes on a shelf, or a thief upon the gallows. It is not denied that stones may be so crushed together by enormous pressure on each side that a heavy mass may be safely laid upon them; but the strength must be derived merely from the lateral resistance, and the line so loaded will be itself part of the load. The semi-elliptical arch has one recommendation yet unexamined. We are told that it is difficult of execution."

In the face of this noisy newspaper thunder Mylne went on and produced one of the most beautiful bridges in England for one hundred and fifty-two thousand eight hundred and forty pounds, three shillings and tenpence, actually one hundred and sixty-three pounds less than the original estimate, an admirable example for all architects present and to come. The bridge, which had nine arches, and was nine hundred and ninety-five yards from wharf to wharf, was erected in ten years and three-quarters. Mylne received five hundred a year, and five per cent on the expenditure. His claims, however, were disputed, and not allowed by the grateful City till 1776. The bridge tolls were bought by government in 1785, and the passage then became free. It was afterwards lowered, and the open parapet condemned by Johnson removed. It was supposed that Mylne's mode of centering was a secret, but in contempt of all quackery he deposited exact models of his system in the British Museum. He

was afterwards made surveyor of St. Paul's Cathedral, and in 1811 was interred near the tomb of Wren. He was a despot among his workmen, and ruled them with a rod of iron. However, the foundations of this bridge were never safely built, and latterly the piers began visibly to subside. The semicircular arch, after all, would have been the stronger. So far the doctor was right.

The old monastic ground seems to have been beloved by painters, for, as we have seen, Vandyck lived luxuriously here, and was frequently visited by Charles the First and his court. Cornelius Jansen, the great portrait painter of James's court, arranged his black draperies, and ground his fine carnations in the same locality, and at the same time Isaac Oliver, the exquisite court miniature painter, dwelt in the same place. It was to him Lady Ayres, to the rage of her jealous husband, came for a portrait of Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, an imprudence that very nearly led to the assassination of the poet lord, who believed himself so specially favoured of Heaven.

Apothecaries' Hall, that grave brick and stone building in Water-lane, is too good a text to be dismissed in a paragraph, and we reserve it for special notice. The king's printing-office for proclamations, &c., used to be in Printing House-square, but was removed in 1770; and we must not forget that where a Norman fortress once rose to oppress the weak, to guard the spoils of robbers, and to protect the oppressor, the Times printing-office now stands, to diffuse its ceaseless floods of knowledge, to spread its resistless aegis over the poor and the oppressed, and ever to use its vast power to extend liberty and crush injustice, whatever shape the Proteus assumes, whether it sit upon a throne or lurks in a swindler's office.

GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S NARRATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THAT STATE OF LIFE," &c.

IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

Two years passed. I was often at the Grange in Harry's holidays, and watched, with a keen interest, in which sorrow and bitterness were blent—sorrow which was prophetic for them, bitterness which was the selfish cry of my heart for joy that could never be mine—the progress of the old story. Harry, as he approached manhood, became more and more devoted to Assunta, and she, after her first struggle,

gave up her whole heart and soul to him. Of me she made a friend. She little guessed all I suffered; and spoke to me, more unreservedly than she did to any one else, as Harry's mentor, as one whom she implicitly trusted. She saw that her idol was but human: with brilliant gifts that might lead to his undoing, and set in the midst of many and great temptations. It is possible that had he been more godlike, she might have loved him less—such are the strange inconsistencies of the human heart. For of all the positions in which a high-souled girl can stand towards a man, that of his good angel is the one which attracts her most.

I have often wondered since that this growing love upon both sides, to which it seemed to me impossible that any one could be blind, should have created no alarm in the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Walbrooke. I can only account for it by supposing that natures, sunk in the slough of a cold conventionality, never dream of the force of a first real passion. It is called "a flirtation among the young people," and is regarded as the measles, or any other evil incident to youth, to be "got over" far better when young, than if the epidemic should be taken late in life. Moreover, Harry was at home but for a few weeks, twice a year, and as his comeliness, his prowess in all field sports, and his joviality, made him friends wherever he went, he had plenty of counter-attraction—or what might be supposed to be counter-attraction—in the county, to neutralise the effect of a pair of dark eyes at the Grange. It was thus, I doubt not, that Mr. Walbrooke thought upon the matter, if he troubled his mind at all about it. When Harry was about eighteen, however—he had then left Westminster a year, and was with a private tutor in Sussex—something must have aroused Mr. Walbrooke's long-slumbering prudence. He resolved that Harry, before going to Oxford, should travel for a year, and during that time I did not go to the Grange.

When I next visited it, some few months after the heir's return, and also after his first term at Oxford, I found Harry much changed, and not for the better, in all ways. He was, indeed, as affectionate towards me as ever, and Assunta's influence, far from having diminished by the year's absence, seemed to have increased. He had also grown into a very handsome man. But he was now impatient of his uncle's control—indeed, of any control but hers; and there was a recklessness, a dare-devilry about

him, at times, which made me apprehensive for the future. Still, whenever she was present, he rarely said or did anything which I regretted; but over our wine after dinner—and he often took more than was wise—he sometimes conducted himself in a way which annoyed Mr. Walbrooke extremely. Harry had imbibed abroad, or at Oxford, liberal opinions, which he more than once took this occasion to announce. It was in vain that his uncle coughed a stern Tory cough, and that I kicked him under the table; nothing would stop him. Then the presence of certain guests always disturbed his equanimity; notably that of one Mr. Ridgway, who was a constant visitor at the Grange during this period. I had seen this person before, but had never noticed him much. It is necessary, now, that I should describe him.

Theophilus Ridgway, of Hapsbury, was a man of mark in the county, I might almost say in England. He was pre-eminently "the man of taste" of his day; and Hapsbury was the culminating proof of it, which people who care for such things came long journeys to see. It was more like an Italian palace than an English country house, and was open to the charge of incongruity, with its statues, and fountains, and marble balustrades, in the midst of a bleak Lincolnshire park, where the sun seemed never to shine, if it could possibly avoid it. But the interior possessed miracles of art, collected by Mr. Ridgway in his travels, and the furniture and decorations were all faultless, each room in its particular style, no hopeless jumble of epochs, such as the dwellings of most bric-à-brac hunters exhibit: all that you saw here was genuine, and all (you were told) was in perfect harmony and "keeping:" only, somehow or other, the general effect left upon the mind was disastrously cold and comfortless. Hapsbury was more than twenty miles from the Grange, but we made an expedition there once, in a coach and four, when a party was staying with Mr. Walbrooke. There were Latin inscriptions, I remember, over doorways, upon marble slabs on the terrace, on summer-houses, and sun-dials—in every possible spot where they could entrap and confound the unlettered, and testify to the elegant classicality of the master of the place. He was, himself, not unlike one of those inscriptions: a marble man, highly polished, gilt-lettered, difficult to read. He had spent a great part of his life in Italy, as some averred, "under a cloud;" clouds,

however, being but intangible vapours drawn upwards from the earth, these were regarded by his partisans as the exhalations of a noxious calumny condensed in order to obscure an effulgent reputation. And among his partisans none was stronger than Mr. Walbrooke. That gentleman would never tolerate a word against his friend, and ceased to invite two neighbours who had let fall hints that there were passages in Ridgway's life which would not bear close examination.

All this I learnt upon the visit I am now describing. He was then a man of fifty, small, well-preserved, with a fine white skin, scarcely creased by age, delicate hands, and a mellifluous voice. His manner was as faultless as his dress, and everything else about him. It was the perfection of good-breeding. If I spoke, he paid as much attention to what the young artist said as to the words that fell from the greatest man at table. He listened with his eyes, he sympathised with his smile, he had always some apposite and graceful rejoinder. No doubt this flattered, and, in a measure, blinded me. Certain it is, that though there was something about the man which baffled me, something which made me doubt, I scarce know why, whether he had any heart, or any principle, I sided with those who thought him very agreeable. His conversation sparkled with anecdote, and occasionally with sarcasm, so sugared that the dull swallowed it unperceived. He indulged sometimes, it is true, in rather too many quotations and allusions to recondite matters which nine out of ten people could not understand; but, after all, it afforded an agreeable contrast to the eternal talk about hounds and horses which prevailed in that fox-hunting district. Mr. Ridgway, I fancy, had never been across a horse in his life. It will be understood that the sort of man I have described would be uncongenial to Harry. In point of fact, he never could tolerate what he termed "that d—d effeminate old prig," and his antipathy was now redoubled by a cause to which I shall come presently. Mr. Walbrooke, however, invited Mr. Ridgway none the less often to his house; indeed, it was remarked that "the man of taste" never had been so constantly at the Grange as during the last six months. And his extreme urbanity towards his friend's nephew made yet more apparent the younger man's rudeness to his uncle's guest.

Time had wrought only good upon

Assunta Fleming. In the world's eyes she was handsomer: a tall, grand-looking creature. In mine, the development of her rare character was what I chiefly saw. Her influence in the household was great, and the love which all bore her was measured chiefly by their capacity for loving. Mr. Walbrooke's was circumscribed within certain reasonable limits; but, as far as his stiff nature would allow, he had a sincere regard for, and an earnest desire to befriend, the penniless foundling. Mrs. Walbrooke's was sentimental and shallow. Lena's was enthusiastic and thorough: she would have gone through fire and water for her friend; and yet Assunta, as I have reason to know, had the delicacy and true wisdom never to make a confidante of Harry's sister. She was fully conscious of her own position, and of his: she knew how unlikely it was that they could ever marry; but every hope of her life was bound up in him, and she could not cast it all from her. She was capable of any sacrifice; but she was scarcely twenty, and with an impassioned, devoted nature, it was asking much to expect in her the prudence to shun a peril which she was too clever not to foresee.

But the difficulties of her position were now complicated by what, to many young women, would have been a subject of triumph and unalloyed satisfaction. It had been confidently asserted that Mr. Ridgway, of Hapsbury, would never marry: that those great estates would pass away to some distant branch of the family: and that Mr. Ridgway himself had expressed perfect indifference as to who should succeed him. He had never been subjugated by the tender passion, and the requirements of the fastidious "man of taste" were such that no woman, it was supposed, could fulfil them. But it now became tolerably apparent to all of us that Miss Fleming had reached that hitherto unattainable eminence, whence it was just possible that she might be invited to step upon the throne of Hapsbury. Not that Mr. Ridgway could be said to be in love, or anything the least like it; but he admired the girl, as he would have admired any noble work of art, watched her, and listened to her, with all his critical faculties on the qui-vive, and smiled complacently, as though saying to himself: "There is no fault to be found. The picture is in keeping throughout. It is the only thing, the finishing touch, which Hapsbury wants to make it complete."

It was no less evident to me, when I heard our host pressing Mr. Ridgway to return to the Grange, and saw, by what contrivances Assunta was constantly thrown in his way, that Mr. Walbrooke was bent upon bringing this marriage about, if it were possible. Hitherto the girls had dined early; now, Lena being sixteen, it was decreed that, henceforward, she and Miss Fleming should appear at the late dinner; and it was generally contrived that Assunta's place should be next to Mr. Ridgway. On one occasion I remember Mrs. Walbrooke's asking Assunta to drive for her into the neighbouring town upon some errand, and then, after having disposed of Lena in another way, suggesting, at the last moment, as though the thought had just struck her, that Mr. Ridgway should accompany Miss Fleming in her drive, and then they "might go and see the old church together." Such little plots were of daily occurrence during his several visits. Was Assunta a dupe of them? or was she so entirely absorbed by Harry, that the thought of Mr. Ridgway, as a suitor, never crossed her mind? I could not tell. One thing, however, was certain; she gave her middle-aged admirer no encouragement. She did not dislike him; she heard his conversation with a certain acknowledgment of its merit; she was willing to be instructed about art, and she smiled at his polished witticisms; but it seemed to be very like reading a book, which, while one admits it to be replete with information, and in point of style admirable, lacks all strong power of interest.

It maddened Harry to look on all this. His animosity against Mr. Ridgway reached its culminating point one evening, when he lost his temper in the most unwarrantable manner. There were several guests in the house; and when we men entered the drawing-room after dinner, Assunta was sitting alone, at a distant table, looking over a portfolio of drawings which had arrived that day. Harry at once drew a chair before her, and sat down, so as completely to block the passage to and from the corner where she was. Mr. Ridgway, who had been separated from her during dinner, would have approached, I saw, but could not. I was standing, sipping my coffee, and, as he retired, I chanced to be in his way: he stopped.

"Your artist's eye must be struck by the effect of Miss Fleming's coiffure to-night. That coronet of hair is wonderfully becoming. I never saw her look so handsome."

"I have seen her dressed so, very often," said I, rather curtly; for I was unreasonable enough to dislike hearing him praise her.

"Well, I have not become blasé on it yet," he replied, with a smile; "and I confess I could hardly take my eyes off her at dinner, as she sat opposite me. Like Dante,

—gli occhi su levai,
E vidi lei che si faceva corona."

Here Mr. Walbrooke, who had been fidgetting about for some minutes, and glancing continually in Harry's direction, called out:

"Let us have a rubber. Harry, come and take a hand, sir. Here are Lord George and Mr. Wilmot ready, and Mrs. Wilmot or your aunt will make the fourth."

"They must excuse me, sir. I never play at whist now," said Harry, without rising.

"Never play at whist? Nonsense! Why, I was afraid you did very little else of an evening at Oxford."

"You said you disapproved of it, so I've given it up; at all events, during the long vacation."

"Nonsense! Come, get up at once. You know very well my advice did not apply to a quiet game at home."

"Mr. Henry Walbrooke's charming deference to his uncle's wishes is really touching," murmured Mr. Ridgway to me. "But even virtue may be carried to extreme—eh? You remember what Horace says?"

Dum vitant stulti vitium, in contraria currunt."

"You don't think Harry a fool, Mr. Ridgway?" I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders with a bland smile. "Not more than other florid young Nimrods. They all become brutalised. They all get, more or less, like their horses and hounds. I dare say Nature gave this young gentleman some brains, but, you see, as Sir Guyon says in the Fairy Queen,

—now he chooseth, with vile difference,
To be a beast, and lacke intelligence."

In the mean time, uncle and nephew were still jangling.

"I'm not fit to play, sir. I'm not, indeed. I got a bad cropper to-day, and am horribly stiff."

"There is no more exertion in sitting before a whist-table than before a work-table," said Mr. Walbrooke, with some little asperity.

"My head feels bothered. I'm too dull to play to-night," rejoined Harry.

"Then you had better not inflict your dulness on Miss Fleming."

"That he will not do, Mr. Walbrooke," said Assunta, with a smile, which I saw covered some uneasiness. "If Harry is too tired to play, I will take a hand—that is, if any one will accept so bad a partner."

This, of course, had its desired effect. Harry rose, with a bad grace, and limped across the room to where the whist-table stood. While they cut in for partners, Mr. Ridgway, with that perfect breeding which veneered all his actions, waited a minute or two, and then, without indecorous hurry, glided towards the seat left vacant by Harry, and slid into it. The latter looked as if he would have liked to kick the performer of this very simple act; and I am sure no amount of stiffness would have prevented him, had he had a fair excuse.

"You will certainly break your neck some day, if you ride in this desperate way," said his uncle, whose serenity being now restored had leisure to think of his nephew's limbs. "I wish you would be more careful."

"Perhaps you would like me to walk round the garden in galoshes and a fur coat?" retorted Harry. The allusion was too pointed to be missed by any one who heard the words, and I felt confident that Mr. Ridgway's sharp ears caught them. But Harry was in that state of irritation which made him perfectly callous to the effect his intemperate speech might produce, and he continued: "Every fellow who rides runs some risks. I'd rather live the life of a man, and die like one, than be dried up into a whitened fungus—something that is not a man, nor a woman either."

Mr. Walbrooke frowned, and his lips twitched angrily: he turned away. Assunta coloured up to the roots of her hair. Mr. Ridgway, without betraying that he had heard a word, leaned across the table and said, with a bland smile:

"So you are a card-player, Miss Fleming? Do you know that I possess the first pack of cards, said to have been invented to amuse poor Charles the Sixth? If it is true, the world is under a heavy debt of gratitude to that despised monarch for having contributed to relieve its ennui for upwards of four hundred years."

"Have they not always done more to destroy happiness than to increase it?" suggested Assunta, who, from her uneasy glances towards the whist-table, I saw was

lending but a divided attention to the "man of taste's" remarks.

"A fool who is bent on self-destruction will not require cards, Miss Fleming," was his reply. "He will do so by his tongue, by his palate, no matter how—*tous les chemins mènent à Rome*."

The covert sarcasm, contrasting with Harry's violent breach of good manners, told with double effect. I saw Assunta wince. Like a clever tactician as he was, Mr. Ridgway pursued his advantage no further. He ignored his youthful rival from that moment, and began discussing the drawings that lay on the table before him. There was not a place of which he had not some anecdote, some apt quotation in connexion with the scene, or some little-known piece of information, gathered in the by-paths of literature, which he had scoured, and the herbarium of which was carefully dried in his memory. Assunta felt much impressed by his cleverness, though she did not hear above one-half of what he said.

The evening at last came to an end. She had no opportunity of speaking privately to Harry (the whist only broke up after the ladies had left the room); but, as I handed her a candle, she whispered:

"Will you talk to him, Mr. Luttrell? He is so intemperate, I dread what he may say or do next. Tell him how miserable he has made me this evening, will you?"

The squire, it was evident, had not got over Harry's last speech. I was not surprised to hear him tell his nephew that he wished to speak to him in Mr. Walbrooke's dressing-room.

"Come to me afterwards, Harry," I said.

And three-quarters of an hour later he entered my room. I saw that something was seriously amiss. He was very pale; and his mouth had a hard-clenched look, which I had rarely seen it wear. He said nothing, but took out his pipe and lit it. I waited for him to begin, but in vain. At last I broke the ground with, "Well, Harry, what passed between you and your uncle? He has been blowing you up, for behaving as you did to-night, I suppose? And really, I must say, your conduct——"

"Now, dear old boy, don't you begin, for I can't stand it. I'm down enough in the mouth as it is. Confound my tongue! I believe it would have been all square if I hadn't spoken."

"Why, what did you say? What has happened?"

"I've had a row—and the long and short of it is, I'm off to-morrow morning."

"Off to-morrow! Where to? I thought the Oxford term didn't begin for another ten days?"

"It does not; but I'm to go to my aunt, Lady Horton's. My uncle says that as I choose to insult old Ridgway, who is to be here a week more, I must go."

I was amazed. I knew that Mr. Walbrooke's obstinacy was capable of making him sacrifice much to the furtherance of any scheme he had taken up; but I had never conceived it possible that it would carry him the length of turning Harry out of doors. I had not taken into account that two ends were to be gained by so doing. After a pause, Harry went on, as he drew a long puff at his pipe, and stared gloomily at the fire.

"But that isn't all—that isn't the worst, Geoff."

"What do you mean? I wish you would tell me distinctly what passed from the beginning, instead of letting it out in dribblets."

"Well, then, this is how it was. He began by saying that my manner had been most offensive to Ridgway ever since he came into the house—that he was a friend of his, and a most distinguished man; and as he hoped to see him very often here, I was to understand that he insisted on his guest being treated with proper respect. I replied that I couldn't respect a fellow like that; but owned I had been wrong in saying what I had, and I promised not to repeat the offence. Then my uncle went on to say that the way in which I tried to monopolise Assunta's society had given rise to remarks, and he could tolerate it no longer. It was all very well when I was a boy—this hanging about her—but now, if continued, it would occasion all sorts of slanderous surmises, and would do her a great injury. Fancy that, Geoff! I think I could have restrained my tongue, if he hadn't said that. I had vowed to myself that her name shouldn't pass my lips; but when I heard those words the blood rushed to my brain—and I didn't know what I was doing—I was mad for the minute, or I shouldn't have said what I did. I told him the world would soon know the truth; I loved her better than anything on earth, and only waited to be of age to ask her to share whatever I had. 'And that is simply nothing,' said my uncle. 'Of course,' I replied, 'I am aware that if you refuse to let us marry, we must wait—and we *will* wait.' He grew very red, and walked up and

down the room. 'You will wait?' he repeated. 'What for, pray? For my death, to inherit this property? Don't make so sure of that; I have hitherto treated you as my heir, but I need not leave you one farthing, if I do not choose; and I certainly should not do so, if I thought it was likely you would marry in direct opposition to my wishes.' I asked him what fault he could find in Assunta? 'Haven't I heard you say constantly you didn't know another girl to compare with her?' 'That's very true,' he said, 'and I have the greatest regard for Miss Fleming, but I don't choose my heir to marry a foundling; and I should cut you off if you did so.' 'Then you may keep your confounded money,' I cried; 'for I'd sooner never touch a farthing of it than give her up!' I know what she and you will say, Geoff. I was a fool, and I knew it, as soon as the words were out of my mouth; but I couldn't help it. My uncle turned coldly away, and for a few minutes he remained silent. At last he said, 'You are a very foolish boy, and ungrateful, too, after all I have done for you. However, I am not going to quarrel with you for a few hasty words; only, I think, after the way in which you have chosen to conduct yourself towards my guest, and now towards me, your remaining here just at present is undesirable. Lady Horton has often asked you to go there when you like. You had better go to-morrow, for the few days before you have to be at Oxford.' I felt stunned, Geoff. Turned out of the house! having to leave Assunta in this way! I couldn't speak for a bit. My blood was cool by this time, and I saw what I had done. There was nothing for it but to beg my uncle to forgive me, and not to send me away. I told him, what was very true, that I was ashamed of having spoken to him as I had done; that I was not ungrateful—that I loved him for all his kindness to me ever since I was a child, and not for the sake of his money; but that, unfortunately, I hadn't always command over my tongue, and said things, when irritated, which I deeply regretted after. But I promised faithfully that this should not occur again, either as regarded Ridgway or himself, if he would not send me away. But he was inexorable. He kept repeating, with that quiet obstinacy of his, that he thought it much better I should go—and, in short, go I must, Geoff!"

"I am very sorry, dear old fellow, but, after all, it might be worse. Though your uncle is obstinate, he has behaved with great forbearance, in treating your

speech as an ebullition of boyish folly. But do take the lesson to heart. You aggrieved Assunta beyond measure to-night. You are proud of your physical prowess, Harry, but what is a man worth who has no self-control?"

"Nothing! I know it," he sighed. "But somehow or other that fellow Ridgway acts upon me as a red rag does on a bull—his white hands, and his quotations, and his confounded civility! And now, you see, Geoff, the brute is making up to Assunta! Suppose"—he stopped and knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and looked at me straight in the face—"suppose, when I'm gone, that the fellow's cleverness gets round her? Suppose she draws comparisons between us?"

"You need fear no comparisons," said I; and the pang that shot through me was audible in a sigh. "Nothing can ever displace you in Assunta's heart. Your only anxiety now, Harry, should be to cause her no pain, to make yourself more worthy of her. Patience and courage, and all will come right. Only remember, the last way to mollify your uncle is to take the tone with him you have done to-night."

"What am I to do, Geoff? Pretend to give in to my uncle? Not go near my darling when I'm here? I can't do that. I can't be a humbug. She shall be my wife, or no other woman shall. Nothing shall make me go back from that. God knows I love her better than anything on earth, Geoff, and I'll die before I give her up."

He leaned his head between his hands, and by the movement of his shoulders I knew he was more agitated than he liked me to see. The old butler had brought to my room a tray with brandy and seltzer-water, by Harry's orders. Presently he raised his head, and, pouring out nearly half a tumbler of brandy, drank it off pure.

"Old boy," I said, gently, "don't get into the habit of having recourse to that whenever you are in trouble. You won't find the bottle a good friend, but a terribly extortionate one, who demands more and more for every drop of temporary comfort he administers."

I believe he scarcely heard me. All words that were not on one subject were wasted at that moment. The stimulant seemed to have no other effect than that of calming him. He said, in a minute or two, "I must see her alone, Geoff, to-morrow,

before I go. Give me a pen and ink, and I'll slip a piece of paper under her door as I pass."

I pushed the blotting-book across the table to him, and he wrote a few lines.

"You'll write to me, Geoff?" he said, as he wished me good-night. "You'll tell me truly all that goes on, won't you?"

"I will; but when you are gone, perhaps Mr. Walbrooke may not care for me to remain."

The next morning, at breakfast, I knew at once, by Assunta's marble stillness, that she and Harry had met, and that she knew all. There was no uneasiness, no anxiety, such as she had evinced the night before; it was the calmness of misery, that has little or no hope. Mr. Walbrooke announced, in a little set formula, that his nephew had received a letter which called him suddenly to his aunt, Lady Horton's. Harry himself said little. Mrs. Walbrooke sent a message to Lady Horton about a particular shop where to get floss silks. Whereupon Mr. Ridgway, who was in unusually brilliant spirits, entered into a dissertation upon embroidery from the earliest ages, described what the "vesture of gold, wrought about with divers colours" was probably like, which the king's daughter of Scripture wore, and thence, by a natural progression, got to that royal piece of work, the Bayeux tapestry. Harry bore it all with exemplary fortitude; perhaps because he was too down-hearted, poor fellow, to be irritable. Then, after breakfast, the dog-cart, with his portmanteau in it, came round to the door, and he bade us good-bye. To take leave of what one loves best, when it is necessary to repress any exhibition of feeling, must always be trying, doubly so at Harry's age, and to one of his temperament. But both he and Assunta went through it bravely. I saw it cost him an effort to shake Ridgway's hand, but he did it; and then, embracing Lena and his aunt, he jumped into the cart, and drove off to meet the "stage," which passed some six miles from the Grange.

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CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER VIII. THE NEWSPAPER PARAGRAPH.

THE discovery which Madge Pierrepont had made—that Gerald Hardinge, who had been so madly in love with her, and George Heriot, Sir Geoffry's discarded son, were one and the same man—not merely rendered her more than ever desirous of effecting a reconciliation between parent and child, but sent her thoughts wandering back to those old times, from dwelling on which she had hitherto successfully tried to preserve them.

In her reminiscences of the time passed at Wexeter Philip Vane played no conspicuous part. On her first arrival at Springside, Madge had been accustomed to think of her husband with feelings of horror for his misdeeds, and of affright lest he should again appear before her. As time wore on she made acquaintances in the new place of her sojourn, and busied herself in their society and in her employment, so that her opportunities for self-communion were few, and when her mind turned upon Philip Vane she found herself thinking of him as of a nightmare under which she had once suffered, and the influence of which had not entirely passed away.

But now, when any such leisure moments as she could steal for herself (and they were but few, for with her return Sir Geoffry had resumed his old habits, and was eager as ever for her companionship), she sat musing over her life in Miss Cave's lodgings. Only one thought in connexion with Philip Vane crossed her mind, and that was one of pity for any woman whom

he might have married. For he must have married again; she had little doubt of that; he had hinted as much in their last interview. Well, what was that to her? The idea did not cause her the smallest emotion of any kind. So that Philip Vane kept clear of her, nothing that he did could have the slightest influence upon her, and she dismissed him from her thoughts as though he had never been.

But Gerald? The sight of the sketch, and its association with the scene which he had painted, had brought about a recurrence of those feelings with which she used to regard him, softened and purified, perhaps, although, in good truth, there was little need for it, by time. She loved to think of him, bright and high-spirited, taking his work as though it were a pleasure, and ever ready to break off to do her some slight service, to give a drawing lesson to Rose. Gerald's honour had been a constant subject of laudatory talk, not unmingled with astonishment, to his impecunious and somewhat shifty companions. Poor as he was, he had never been known to borrow a farthing, and generally managed to help those whose need was greater than his own. So tenacious was he of his self-respect, that it was with great difficulty he was ever induced to enter a public-house. Clever, brave—Madge remembered how, on the occasion of a picnic, he had jumped into a lock on the Wex, and saved the life of a child which had fallen overboard from the boat—handsome and energetic, he had all the qualities which parents were usually so proud to see in their children. What could have caused this severance between Sir Geoffry and his son? It must have been a bitter quarrel, and one which Madge thought, as she scrutinised the old man's features, and marked the hard look in his

eyes and the severe lines round his mouth, one which would be hard to heal.

When she at first heard of the state of affairs from the sufficiently reticent Captain Cleethorpe, she had determined upon doing her best to effect this reconciliation, but she hesitated now. Would it not be thought, when it came to be discovered—as it would, as it must—that she and Sir Geoffry's son were old acquaintances, that her motives were more than open to a suspicion of selfishness, and that her exertions had really been made for the purpose of bringing her old lover back to her feet? Would Gerald not think so himself? He was generous, she knew, but she also knew that he was rash and impulsive, and, from the glimpse of his behaviour at the mention of her name, which Rose's letter had afforded her, she imagined that he still remembered her abrupt desertion of him with bitterness. Moreover, the mere fact of there having been any previous acquaintance between them would render it doubly hard to deal with Sir Geoffry, who, notwithstanding his undoubted regard for her, was as wrong-headed and as likely to jump at false conclusions as any of his neighbours.

It seemed as though she were destined to be self-reliant and self-contained through life. At each crisis of her career (and there had been times when, on the steps then taken, her whole future rested), she had always had to depend upon her own judgment, and in this last strait there was no one to whom she could apply for counsel.

Captain Cleethorpe, always kind, always gentlemanly, and desirous of advancing her interests, was nevertheless impractical and rather slow of comprehension. Mr. Drage, with the influence he had recently acquired over Sir Geoffry, would be the best man to aid her in her purpose, but he would then think that on the former occasion of her confidence with him, she had only told him half her story; nor did she believe that he, good man though he was, would be particularly anxious to aid in introducing into the family circle at Wheatecroft a young man, who had once been passionately devoted to the lady then acting as house-keeper there.

And that comprised her list of trustworthy friends; she had numerous acquaintances, pleasant people enough in their way, wishing her well, kind and neighbourly in their behaviour towards her, but not people whom she could consult in any

matter of business, much less intrust with an important secret such as this. Madge felt that, in any other matter, Sir Geoffry himself would have been the best person to appeal to, and, indeed, at one time she had made up her mind to speak out and tell him frankly of the discovery which she had made by means of the sketch, and of the circumstances under which in earlier life she had met with his discarded son. Who but she could bear witness to Gerald's honour and uprightness, to his industry and kind-heartedness, to the patient long-suffering with which he kept the secret of his altered position, and the cheerfulness with which he earned his hard living in the comparatively humble sphere to which, by the quarrel with his father, he had been relegated? But, on further thought, Madge determined to alter her plan of action, and resolved to sound Sir Geoffry before taking any definite steps.

An opportunity for so doing came unexpectedly. One morning Captain Cleethorpe arrived at Wheatecroft earlier than his wont. There were few days on which the captain failed to put in an appearance for a chat with Sir Geoffry, generally bringing with him the latest gossip from the club, or some Indian journal with news of persons or places known to the old general. But on this occasion, the breakfast things were still on the table when the captain was seen cantering up the avenue. Ordinarily, if his first inquiry were not for Mrs. Pickering, he invariably took an opportunity of seeing her on his way to Sir Geoffry's sanctum; but on this particular morning, though the door of her room was open, Captain Cleethorpe merely nodded to her kindly but hurriedly, and passed on to the library. In the passing glance which she thus had of him, Madge noticed that there was a worn and anxious look in his face, and that his manner was preoccupied. Sir Geoffry speedily joined the captain, and they were closeted together for about an hour. In the conversation carried on between them, their voices ran high, and although no words could be distinguished, it was evident that some matter of moment was under discussion. Madge, who had been rather frightened at these outward signs of a storm, was pleased, when the discussion was at an end, and the two gentlemen emerged from the study, to see them shake hands in their usual friendly way at the hall-door; but Captain Cleethorpe's countenance still wore a distressed look, while Sir Geoffry was flushed and agitated.

When the door was closed, and Captain Cleethorpe had ridden away, the general turned back into the house, and asked Madge to send him a glass of wine. There was something in her look which caused him to say:

"You are surprised at such a request from me, Mrs. Pickering, and with good reason, seeing how utterly unused I am to touch anything before tiffin? But the fact is, I have been rather upset by the news which Cleethorpe brought me, and the conversation which it led up to."

"No bad news concerning yourself, I hope, Sir Geoffry?" asked Madge, who was burning with curiosity to know what had occurred; having a faint idea that Captain Cleethorpe's visit might have had some connexion with Gerald.

"No, not in the least, neither concerning me nor you, Mrs. Pickering; so for the matter of that I don't see why I need have taken any interest in it. The fact is, that Captain Cleethorpe, who is the best-hearted fellow in the world, has come to me about his servant Cooke, whom you may recollect."

"I have seen him, I think. He has been with Captain Cleethorpe some time?"

"Certainly; came with him out of the regiment; tall, red-haired, well set-up man, most respectable in his position of life. This Cooke has a son, who is an office-lad with Drew and Dean, solicitors in the town, and it appears that of late he has fallen into bad company, neglected his duties, and was yesterday detected in some petty embezzlement."

"How dreadful for his father!" said Madge, involuntarily.

"Exactly," said Sir Geoffry, bitterly; "that's just what I said to Captain Cleethorpe. He came here in a highly nervous state, as you must have noticed, to try and enlist my sympathies for the youth. Drew and Dean are, it appears, agents for my London solicitor, and Captain Cleethorpe had a notion that, if I were to plead with them for the boy, they might be induced to forego the prosecution upon which at present they have decided."

"And did you consent to plead for the boy, Sir Geoffry?"

"Most positively and decidedly not," said the old man, promptly. "The youth has committed a crime, let him take the consequence of it. Yes. I see you look horrified; I have no doubt it is very wrong, and I feel certain that if Mr. Drage were here, that he would endeavour to show

me, &c. &c. But in matters of this kind, there is a touch of the pagan in me, and I hold to my text."

"But for the sake of the poor father?"

"Ah, there your woman's wit divines what Cleethorpe had not the sharpness to perceive; for the sake of the father many persons might be induced to act as Cleethorpe asked, which is no more nor less than of 'doing evil that good may come of it,' but I say no. This man's life has been for the last dozen years a hard struggle, during which he has had to deny himself not merely the comforts, but almost the necessities of life, for the sake of rearing in respectability this boy, in the vain hope that he should find a comfort in him in his age. This hope is now blighted, but at the same time the fallacy is put an end to; the boy must expiate his crime; the man must canterise the wound which has been made in his heart, and must place his affections on something else."

"Are you quite able to judge in such a matter, Sir Geoffry?" asked Madge, looking at him earnestly. "Recollect the relations between the two; recollect that you are recommending a father to sit in judgment on his son. If you were in that poor man's place, could you—would you, do the same?"

"If I were in that man's place, I could, and I would," said Sir Geoffry, firmly.

And Madge knew her employer sufficiently well to be certain that any attempt to plead Gerald Hardinge's cause, or any proposition for a reconciliation between him and his father, would be at that time ineffectual. Moreover, within a very short time of Captain Cleethorpe's memorable visit to Wheatcroft, an event occurred which gave Madge but little time to devote to other people's troubles, and induced her to concentrate all her thoughts and energies on a subject with which, as she imagined, her happiness was intimately concerned.

As has previously been stated, it was Madge's practice to read aloud to Sir Geoffry on such evenings as he did not go to the club, or entertain friends at dinner, passages from books and journals with which Wheatcroft was always liberally supplied. The old general had had little time for reading in his youth, and the works of those authors who had come into vogue while he was in India were perfectly fresh to him, and from many of them he received great delight. For home politics, for what was passing in the great world of London, he cared very little; but he was always

keenly alive to anything bearing on the service in which his life had been passed, and to all news from India. Sir Geoffry had very little sense of humour, and his favourite journals were remarkable for the copiousness of their information rather than for their wit; but probably nothing in the world had ever caused the general so much amusement, as to listen to Madge's reckless pronunciation of the Hindostanee words and Indian proper names with which her reading was studded. A hearty laugh during the whole course of his life had been almost unknown to him, and he was far too well-bred to let any woman, whatever might be her position, have an idea that she was exposing herself to ridicule; but he suffered a martyrdom in repressing his smiles, more especially when Madge, trying, in order to please him, to get up a fictitious interest in the budget through which she was wading, would ask the meaning of some of the words which she had so abominably mispronounced.

One evening, Sir Geoffry, who had experienced rather an extra amount of enjoyment from Madge's mistakes, hearing her voice suddenly break and stop, looked up, and was surprised to find that she had fallen back in her chair while still tightly clutching the newspaper which she had been reading. The old general jumped to his feet and hurried across the room, intending to summon assistance; but before he could reach the bell, Mrs. Pickering had sufficiently recovered to sit up, and to beg him in a low tone to take no further notice of her indisposition, which had almost passed away.

"Passed away!" echoed the general, taking Mrs. Pickering's hand kindly between his own; "an attack like that, under which you completely collapsed for a moment, does not pass away so quickly. I am afraid you have been over-exerting yourself, my dear Mrs. Pickering, and that I have been over-exacting in my demands on your strength."

She said, "No," that it was nothing beyond a little faintness, which might have been caused by the heat of the room. She had not been well for the last few days; but she was perfectly ready to go on reading.

This, however, Sir Geoffry would not hear of. He strongly recommended Mrs. Pickering to take a pint of champagne before going to bed; she was a little low, and wanted picking up, and for that, in his experience both in England and in India,

there was nothing like champagne. She would not? Well; she knew best, but that was his prescription, at all events. She should certainly knock off reading for the night, and he would advise her to get to bed as soon as possible. He wished her good-night, and trusted she would not attempt to rise unless she felt herself perfectly recovered the next morning.

"Very extraordinary woman that," said the old general, as he closed the door behind her; "never seems to me to eat anything, and drinks as little as though she were a Scotch griff, determined to outlast all his colleagues. It is perfectly plain to me that she wants more nourishment. I must get Budd to prescribe stimulants for her; perhaps if they are ordered by him, she may be induced to take them. By the way, what was that very interesting paragraph she was reading when she was taken ill?" pursued Sir Geoffry, picking up the fallen newspaper, and looking at it through his double glass. "Something about exchanges, I think—no, no, this was it," and he read the following paragraph:

"We understand that Mrs. Bendixen, widow of Andreas Bendixen, Esq., late senior partner in the well-known firm of Bendixen, Bishchoffsheim, and Kaulbach, of Calcutta and Shanghai, is about to be married to Philip Vane, Esq., formerly in the army, but well known of late in the City in connexion with several successful financiering operations. The marriage will take place at the beginning of next month. Our Indian readers will not need to be reminded of the vast wealth amassed by Mr. Bendixen, a large portion of which was bequeathed to his widow."

"Bendixen," muttered the general to himself; "I recollect him in Calcutta: a man of my own age, I should think. I didn't know his wife; I suppose he married after he came home. Vane, Vane? Can't be the little man with red hair that was in the Twenty-sixth? No, his name was Tom, and he died of sunstroke. Philip Vane, known in the City? I wonder if old Sam Irving knows anything about him?" Then the general sat down and tried to continue the perusal of the papers, but he soon found himself dropping to sleep; and after a good deal of nodding and starting, he yielded the point and went off to bed.

About an hour afterwards, when perfect quiet reigned throughout the house, Madge Pierrepont opened the door of her bedroom, stole quietly down the staircase into

the library, and possessed herself of the newspaper, with which she returned in the same stealthy manner. Once in her own room again, she lighted a candle, threw a heavy cloak on the floor along the door, so that no chance rays might penetrate to the landing, and, wrapping her dressing-gown around her, sat down to read.

So she was right in her supposition that her sudden illness had not deceived her, but had itself been caused by what she had read. There it was plainly visible before her burning eyes. "Philip Vane, formerly of the army;" there could be no doubt about it. He must have either a high opinion of her powers of endurance, or an utter contempt for her, when he could sanction the insertion of such a paragraph! She could understand the announcement well enough when the ceremony had been performed, and the whole thing settled; but to have it bruited about beforehand, when there was a chance of interference, was very unlike Philip Vane's usual discretion. Ah, she had forgotten—she, the only one woman, except the bride, interested in the intended marriage, was also the only person acquainted with the fact—a revelation of which would render the marriage impossible, and her antagonism was apparently despised. Let Philip Vane have a care; for if he were about to take this step reliant on her tolerance, or defiant of her opposition, most assuredly he had miscalculated the depths of her resentment. "Well known for his success in the City," the newspaper said; he was prosperous then in every way; she did not grudge him that kind of success, but was he to marry again, glorying in his crime and announcing the value of the conquest he had made in a vulgar, vaunting paragraph, while she was to lead a solitary, celibate life, supported by her own labour, and denying herself the rest, support, and devotion which in two instances at least had been proffered to her?

He should not be suffered to carry on matters thus, with a high hand, without her making some attempt to check him, that she was determined. Accustomed as she had been for a long time to think she had schooled herself to disregard anything appertaining to Philip Vane, she was astonished to find how much and how strongly this intelligence had affected her. The old defiant spirit which at one time had been in the habit of obtaining occasional dominion over her, seemed once more aroused, and she felt that it would be impossible for her to

submit herself quietly to the insult thus brought under her notice. Moreover, it was her duty to prevent this woman, whoever she might be, from being thus sacrificed. Not that there was much fear that Philip Vane would desert a wife who brought to him riches and position, but she at least ought to be warned of what manner of man it was that sought her hand, and of the impossibility of his legally fulfilling his contract. Yes, she would act, and act at once. The thought of the calm, contemptuous manner in which her existence had been ignored by Philip Vane rendered her far more incensed against him than she was at the time of his heartless desertion of her, and nerved her to the resolution of showing him that, though up to a certain point she had accepted the terms imposed upon her, by supporting herself quietly, and leading uncomplainingly a solitary life, there was yet a measure of outrage which she would not brook.

What steps should she take? She must have advice on this point, and fortunately she was enabled to command it. Mr. Drage was acquainted with the fact of her former marriage, and to him she would appeal, telling him what news she had so strangely heard, and asking his advice as to what would be the best course for her to pursue. Thinking it over further, she admitted to herself that Mr. Drage's counsel was only required on a lesser point. That she would make some move in the matter, that she would assert herself, and not merely threaten, but carry out her vengeance if this marriage were proceeded with, she had determined. Anything that Mr. Drage might say in opposition to this decision, and she had some idea that he might be opposed to it, would be in vain; all she wanted of him was advice as to the best steps for her to take. Thus firmly resolved, Madge fell asleep and dreamed a pleasant dream, in which Philip Vane, who had gone into the church, was painting a large picture, the central figures in which were Gerald Hardinge and an Indian lady, quite black, whom he had recently married.

The next morning Mr. Drage was in his study, looking through some notes for a sermon which he intended to write, when Mrs. Pickering was announced. It was not unusual for Madge to call at the rectory to spend an hour with little Bertha, when her duties took her into the town; but Mr. Drage never saw her unexpectedly, or even heard her name mentioned, without

signs of painful embarrassment. Accordingly, he advanced with flushing cheeks to greet his visitor.

"This is very kind of you, Mrs. Pickering," said he, with outstretched hand; "you never forget your old charge; I am sure she will be delighted to see you."

"I have not come to see her this morning, Mr. Drage; my visit is entirely to you."

"To me?"

"Yes, you, and you alone of all people in the world, can give me the advice which I require."

This exordium was anything but calculated to allay the rector's perturbation.

"You recollect a conversation which we had some time since, Mr. Drage, a confession which I made to you?"

Mr. Drage bowed in acquiescence.

"Last night I received information by the merest accident, through the medium of a newspaper paragraph, that my husband——"

"Was dead!" cried Mr. Drage, bending eagerly forward.

"Was going to be married again!" said Madge Pierrepont.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

A COLONEL OF PANDOURS.

To accurately compare the Prussian officers of Frederick the Great's time with their more polished, but equally brave descendants, we must turn to those wild days of fighting when Turkish sabres were always flashing over the Bosnian frontier, and when the irregular bands which Austria sent against the turbaned infidels included men of such chivalrous and desperate hardihood as the colonel of Pandours, a hero of the Seven Years' War, whose life-size portrait we shall here attempt to place before our readers' eyes.

Francis Trenck (a cousin of the celebrated prison breaker), born at Reggio, in Calabria, in 1711, was the son of a Prussian gentleman, whose ancestors had been for ages lords of the great and little Scharlaken and Schahanlaken. His mother was of the Kettern family, and descended from the ducal house of Courland. Trenck began early to display that fearlessness and gasconading courage that ever afterwards distinguished him, for at four years old he wounded himself with one of his father's pistols, and at five robbed some market women, whom he had at first frightened by flourishing a banger. At seven he

accompanied his father through a whole campaign, which ended with the battle of Peterwardin, where his sire received two dangerous wounds from the Turkish sabres. Not long after, the young fire-eater was present at the battle of Milazzo, in Sicily, where his father was twice shot through the calf of the leg. Swords having been the young soldier's playthings, it was not unnatural that, in that same year, young Trenck fought his two brothers, who were jealous of his progress in Latin syntax, and wounding one, put the other to flight.

In the year 1725, soon after the appointment of the elder Trenck to the governorship of the castle of Brodt, a fortress on the river Save, the border line of Slavonia, Trenck's brother was thrown from a coach and killed, and he himself was all but lost in the ice while duck-shooting. In 1727, the young Prussian launched into life, the Hungarian Palatine, Count Nicholas Palf, presenting him with a pair of colours in his own regiment, but, after a time, the young man retired to Pasturat, a Slavonian estate, bought for him by his father, and lived there tolerably tranquilly as a country squire till the year 1734. In July of that year, Trenck set out with a retinue of twenty dashing Pandour tenants (the roads being infested with highwaymen), to go and buy hunters at a fair at Nassiza. Here, two of his tenants having their horses stolen, Trenck in a fury started two of his hard-spurring, rough-and-ready followers to overtake the thieves. The Pandours seized the rascal, and, in an attempt at rescue, shot a ringleader of the robber village. The magistrate of Nassiza, instead of punishing the horse-stealer, angrily demanded the surrender of the Pandour who had killed the robber. Trenck refusing, the magistrate immediately ordered forty of his own Pandours to carry him off by force, a command which Trenck promptly met, by enjoining his twenty troopers not to let the rogue out of their hands alive. The forty Pandours were rough people, and they instantly fired at ten paces, killing Trenck's harambascha, or captain, dead on the spot, and grazing Trenck's ear. Trenck and his nineteen men instantly darted off to Essock and demanded satisfaction. But the staff auditor there being Trenck's bitter enemy at once put him into arrest, and condemned him to pay seventeen hundred florins for fine and law charges, his Pandour who killed the refractory countryman being condemned to seven years' hard labour

at the fortifications. The vexation of this brought on the yellow jaundice, and Trenck would have died had not Count Kevenhuller, the commandant of Esseck, soon released him from his imprisonment. Disgusted with Slavonia, the young officer then went to live with his father at Leitschau, where he was commandant, and in this place, Trenck's temper being rather ruffled with recent vexations, he cut off an Hungarian's arm in a sabre duel. Here, also, he fell desperately in love with the wife of a count, and was challenged by the indignant husband to fight with pistols. While they were making ready, the ramrod of one of Trenck's pistols broke, at which he at once flung away the weapon, and advanced to meet the furious count with one pistol only. The count stepped forward eleven quick paces, fired, and missed; Trenck then blazed off, and shot him through the breast, at which, in his memoirs, the baron rejoices, with not the slightest compunction in the world. Another scrape, which led to Trenck the incorrigible being put in arrest for six weeks, compelled his father to send him back again to his rough Slavonian estate.

But the wild young soldier was not long to rust in rustic solitude. In 1737, the Turkish war broke out like the rush of a rocket, and down, with clash of cymbals and roll of kettle-drums, came the Moslems on the Danubian frontier. Trenck's blood fired at this, and off he rode to Count Seckendorff, offering to raise four thousand Pandours, and to carry them into Bosnia at his own expense. Mortified at his offer being refused, Trenck instantly entered the Russian service, and engaged as second captain in Cuming's newly raised regiment of Russian hussars, which were sent through Poland to Kieff. Now Trenck met with the most perilous adventures of his life.

In April, 1738, the Russian army, three hundred thousand strong, set out across the river Dnieper for Bender, a fortress on the Turkish frontier. Trenck, sent galloping off with despatches to the Don Cossacks and Calmucks, and, after that, as far as Astracan, did not rejoin the army till it had reached a wild desert country on the other side of the river Bug. The day after his return, a loud screeching and firing announced the attack of a fierce horde of one hundred thousand Crimean Tartars, who came rushing on, howling like wild beasts. A hot cannonade followed, which ended in the slaughter of fourteen

thousand Tartars. "During the whole action," says Trenck, with more even than his usual modesty, "I was exposed to the very hottest of the enemy's fire, and behaved throughout with so much undauntedness, as to merit the special commendation of General Munich, who was an eye-witness of my conduct." A true Gascon was this rough hussar, a little wolfish in his rage, a little sharkish in his love of plunder, but fearless as a grizzly bear, and brave as his own sword.

Not far from the river Dniester the Tartars were at it again. In the dusk of the evening Trenck's hussar regiment was surrounded by clouds of the enemy. His colonel, major, captain, and lieutenant-colonel rode off at once to the army half a league distant, and forgot to return, but Trenck stood firm as a wall, with fourteen men, till his scattered regiment could halt and form. But for this they would have been all mince-meat in a quarter of an hour. The Tartars halted a moment, then came on with an hurrah. Six of the fourteen hussars were instantly speared, the rest wounded. Trenck's bullets were soon all gone, and he had only his sabre to guard his head. The first rascal that came at him he slashed across the body, then grappled with him, but while he was trying to drag the rogue off his horse a second Tartar came, "and ran his spear through my backbone and spleen," as the gallant hussar expresses it. Leaving his sabre sticking in the first Tartar's carcass, Trenck felt it was time to save himself; so spurring his horse he rode off to the army with the Tartar spear still sticking in his back. The surgeon instantly pulled it out, and placed him in a litter, and the brave Quixote, strong as an ox, recovered after four weeks' bandaging. This unlucky campaign, in which the Russians lost twenty thousand horses and oxen, and buried fifty thousand brave men, ended in the Muscovites burying their bombs and cannon under a heap of corpses, and retreating to the frontier.

Trenck had now been so long without a duel, that he grew quite hungry for a single combat. Having words, therefore, at Baron Lowenthal's table, he called out the offender, a Russian officer, who wounded him on the thumb joint. Getting cured in about fourteen days, Trenck again challenged the Russian with sword and pistols. And this time he meant mischief. Having fired both his pistols and missed, the Russian drew his sword to leap on Trenck, who, however,

being on his guard, fired steadily, and shot the rash Muscovite just on the top of the forehead, and but for the man's hood would have killed him on the spot. Fresh troubles soon broke like a storm on this lion of a man. A colonel of Orloff's dragoons, abusing and striking him for some military movement which did not please him, Trenck boxed his ear and drew his sword on him. The colonel at once carried his complaints to General Romanzoff, who, hating all Germans, put Trenck under arrest, loaded with irons of twenty-eight pounds weight, which brought on a violent fever. After languishing for three weeks, Colonel Orten, a Prussian friend, came to tell him that he had been condemned to be shot, but that six of his friends had sworn together to rescue him from prison, and conduct him to Poland. Trenck answered resolutely that his honour would not permit him to run from so unjust a sentence; therefore, although equally obliged to the colonel and his other friends, he could not accept their kind offer. During his illness Trenck was robbed, as he says pathetically, of everything but his two litter horses, three shirts, a furred night-gown, and two hundred ducats, which he had secretly sewn in the waistband of his breeches.

At length came the 10th of January, which the baron, as proud of his misfortunes as of his exploits, says justly, "was one of the gloomiest days of his whole life." Before daybreak General Hickman's adjutant came into the room where Trenck lay in bed, racked by fever, and guarded by an officer and two sentinels, to drag him to the place of execution. Half dead, and very feeble, Trenck supplicated the adjutant to send the grenadiers to shoot him in bed, as he was too ill to move. On this one of the sentinels brutally dragged the sick man out of his bed, and hauled him barefooted, and in his night-gown, through ice and snow, to a ring surrounded by soldiers, where his sentence of death was publicly read to him as he knelt there, too weak to stand. A sergeant then came, and, according to Russian custom, pinned a white paper heart to the left breast of the doomed man. They were going to blindfold him, but this disgrace he stoutly resisted, declaring that no one should prevent him staring death boldly in the face. While he was still struggling, an ensign came running up, crying "A pardon." Trenck's life was spared, but only on the shameful conditions that he should work six months at the fortifications, and at the end of that time

leave Russia for ever. "I was prodigiously shocked," says the unconquerable Trenck, "at so ignominious a forgiveness, and loudly exclaiming against it, I insisted on being put immediately to death." But no one heeding his entreaties, Trenck was carried off in his anger, and sent to the fortress of Pezier, near Kieff. There was there a dungeon in the ramparts, crowded with four hundred wretches condemned to Siberia. On giving six ducats to the captain of his escort, Trenck obtained leave to live in one of five tents built under the outer walls. For another six ducats to the officer who summoned him the first morning to his slavish toil, the prisoner obtained exemption from that disgrace. "The Russians," he writes, with an anger one can hardly be surprised at, "are a pack of greedy wretches, and for a glass of brandy any one of them will cut his brother's throat." Living on wretched soldiers' food, and deprived of all society, Trenck, during his second relapse of fever, was the most miserable of men. A Neapolitan missionary, however, soon interceded for his removal to the guard-house, and some snow, with white vitriol and raspberry juice, at last cured his lingering ailment. One day that Count Munich passed the guard-house, Trenck started out, flung himself on his knees, besought him to remember the vicissitudes of fortune, and entreated permission to return to his own country. The request was granted. "I made the promise never to return to Russia," says Trenck, bitterly, "with infinite pleasure, and would have engraved it on steel, to have it in perpetual memory, had that also been required."

On February 8th, 1740, Trenck set out for Germany, with two servants, seven horses, and an escort of nine soldiers, who had to conduct him to the frontier of Poland. After twice escaping from Polish banditti, Trenck arrived safe at his father's house at Leitschau. The old man shed tears of joy at the sight of the long-lost son; Trenck, embracing him, told him his sufferings and adventures in many lands; then they both joined in offering thanks to God for so wonderfully preserving the soldier in the midst of many perils. But the old nature soon broke out; Trenck's wife was dead, and his father importuned him to marry again; but Trenck's experience of matrimony had not been favourable, so he resolved to go and visit again his estate in Slavonia. To his rage he found the country overrun by robbers, who plundered, beat, and murdered the peasants.

Instantly, with a soldier's promptitude, Trenck sent out thirty Pandours to scour the country. These men brought in a boor, who, after six hundred and forty-six lashes, confessed who the thieves were. Trenck instantly beat the forest; meeting a gang of robbers he made nine prisoners, and brought home the heads of all the rest. As for the nine thieves, they were either hung or broken on the wheel. Three only now were left, and one of the worst of these had crossed into the Turkish frontier. This rascal, named Vidach, Trenck determined to secure. Dressing, therefore, as a Pandour peasant, he crossed the Save with one servant, under pretence of buying horses. Entering Vidach's house, he seized his father, an old man, and rifled a great chest full of plunder. He carried off the old man, and at night made him ford a branch of the Save. The son pursued them. Trenck refording the river with only his sword, stunned Vidach before he could draw his pistols. The robber refusing Trenck's order to follow him, a struggle ensued, which is vigorously described by the baron. "On his refusing," says Trenck, "I laid hold of his right arm with my whole might, and though he was one of the strongest and stoutest fellows in the whole country" (having killed seven Turks with his own hand, in an action near Cothaw, in Turkey), "nevertheless, I squeezed and pressed him to me till I made his very clothes crack on his body. In the struggle he laid hold of one of his pistols, which was ready primed, and would have fired it through my body, had I not been quick enough to slip my right hand between the pan and flint, whereby I cut myself severely. I then laid hold of my sword with my left hand, and stuck it cleverly into his body till the blood spurted into my face. Thereupon I flung him from me, and as he fell I cut his head from the body at one blow. This done, I took hold of the head by the hair, and carrying it over the river with me, I flung it before the father, who was somewhat, though not very much, shocked at the spectacle." This rough justice brought an old enemy, the auditor of Esseck, down upon Trenck, and General Guadagni, the governor of the district, ordered his arrest. He took refuge in a Franciscan convent, but finding even that not safe, loaded a pack-horse with eight thousand florins and some baggage, and with one servant made straight for the Croatian frontier. As the plague was then in Slavonia, the guards at the cordon re-

fused to let him pass, upon which he dashed into the river Sava, and swam across. At Vienna, Trenck, however, fell on his feet, for Prince Charles of Lorraine introduced him to Queen Maria Theresa, against whom the King of Prussia had just declared war by invading Silesia. Trenck's offer to raise a body of one thousand Pandours was accepted, and in three weeks the one thousand men were ready to march.

But these were petty adventures; the greatest danger of Trenck's troublous life occurred in attacking the castle of Diesenstein, where, during the great Seven Years' War, some Bavarian jägers had fortified themselves, after plundering the country and massacring their prisoners.

Investing the place closely, and taking post in a new house close to the ditch of the castle, Trenck broke down the back walls of the house, and loopholing the front, opened fire with two pieces of cannon on the obnoxious fortress. Two more cannon he placed on an adjoining eminence, and two mortars, behind some covered rising ground, one hundred and fifty paces from the wall. Four of the first bombs killing three of the Bavarian jägers, twenty-three horses, and some cattle, the enemy made a savage sally, but being hurled back by the resolute Pandours, retreated, and hung out the white flag. The garrison of one hundred and ninety-three men Trenck condemned to work on the fortifications in Hungary. The conqueror then went with Baron Schrenck, the governor, the two captive commandants, and the chaplain, to take stock of his new possessions. They arrived on their rounds at a cellar (in the very centre of the castle, and near one of the towers), built of massive square stones, the door hung with padded matting. Whilst Trenck was sitting here drinking a glass of beer, he asked to where the door led. Baron Schrenck, in a kind of terror, replied that it was merely a prison. Trenck, suspecting that some Pandour or Austrian prisoners might be stowed away there, went and looked in. About forty paces in under the tower there were five large casks lying in a kind of hollow, and near them several cartridges strewn about. He asked Schrenck what the cask contained, and said he hoped it was not gunpowder concealed there. Schrenck swore and protested that he would forfeit his life if he had not given in a faithful inventory of everything. Trenck, suspicious as old soldiers should ever be, called for a light to make sure, and on their bringing a lighted

torch, found, sure enough, that the casks were full of powder. We must tell the awful results in his own rough, vigorous words: "I was not too far gone," he says, "to escape the danger, for just as I said, 'Why the tower is full of powder!' the casks flew immediately up into the air with such a horrid noise, as if the whole castle had blown up, and tumbled on my head; which it would, indeed, inevitably have done, had not the powder made a way for itself through the roof, carrying the whole tower straight into the sky. The smoke and fire of the powder flung me, with my face and hands prodigiously burnt, out into the cellar flat on my face, and if I had not instantly, upon my getting up, staggered towards the opposite door and escaped, I must have been suffocated with the smoke. To add to my misfortune, two horns full of gunpowder in my pocket took fire, and scorched me in a most frightful manner. Baron Schrenck, who was with me, was in a more wretched condition even than myself, for having no boots on, both his shin-bones were sadly burnt. It is not difficult for me now to conceive the pain that people must go through who are drowned, shot, burnt, or hanged. This is certain, that my misery was past all imagination or power of pen to describe. I leaped directly out of the castle, half burnt as I was, without a bit of hair left on my head, and called out to my people to come quickly, and pull off my clothes, which were all in a flame. But they being afraid that the enemy had contrived to spring some more mines, would not come near me. Meanwhile I flung away the cartouches I had about me, which, as soon as they fell to the ground, blew up with a blaze. I then took off my belt, but in so doing my nails and skin stuck to the buckle. After that I pulled off my coat, which came off the left arm tolerably well, but in trying the right arm it peeled the skin completely off. The excess of pain overcame me at last, and being carried to a brewhouse near, I fell into a swoon. After our surgeon had dressed me as well as he could, I was carried back eight miles to the city of Passau. In this whole expedition I had but one man killed, who was a bombardier, and three Pandours and myself wounded."

Trenck's public entrance into Passau was characteristic. He lay bandaged in a chaise, half dead, but proud of having been more blown up than any man that ever survived, followed by his Pandours and their one hundred and ninety-three pri-

soners. Behind his chaise came Baron Schrenck, bundled up till he looked like a sack, and roaring with pain. For ten days Trenck lay in unabated pain, and was despaired of by five doctors. He neither ate, drank, nor slept for these ten days; but eventually his kind landlady saved him by homely, natural remedies and careful nursing. He had the constitution of a Polar bear; the eleventh day the pain abated; his face and left hand began to dry up, and a tender new skin appeared. The fifteenth day, covered with plaisters, the brave Pandour visited Count Kevenhuller, and received from the queen a colonel's commission. The count, asking him to name a partisan leader who would try and burn the enemy's magazines at the castle of Au, near Weissenstein, only two leagues from the hostile camp, Trenck, though scarcely able to grasp a bridle, offered at once to go, and, after great dangers, actually penetrated as far as Au, and there set fire to fifteen thousand waggons full of hay, straw, and oats.

In 1743, Trenck stole time to ride to Leitschau, to see his aged father, who was fast dying of gout, jaundice, and dropsy. When Trenck entered the room the old man was sitting in a passive way, leaning his elbows on the table, and thinking alternately of the dangers his son was undergoing, and of "the fame he was acquiring throughout Europe." Trenck embraced him tenderly, and cried for joy at seeing him. His father told him that the doctor had only given him three weeks to live, but he should now die contented. "It was my hard fate," says Trenck, "that I could stay no longer than fourteen days with him, during which time I gave him a long and complete history of all my adventures." Nine days after Trenck's departure the old man died, and was buried with great state in his parish church.

From his dying father Trenck was summoned to put down a revolt in Slavonia, where four thousand rebels had gathered threateningly. The mere terror of Trenck's name led to an armistice. The thirty-six rebel deputies Trenck rather treacherously arrested, beheading the ring-leader, hanging the second, shooting a third, and sending the remaining thirty-three to the galleys. The stern officer then levied in five weeks seven hundred Pandours and one hundred hussars, led them off to the war in Bavaria, and immediately volunteers with some Croats to storm a tête de pont on the river Lech, to

the great delight of Prince Charles, who invited him that night to supper.

And here these wild adventures suddenly close with these valedictory words: "Thus ended this campaign—a campaign most glorious for the arms of my sovereign—a campaign wherein Heaven has given evident proofs of having espoused her injured cause, by defeating the many iniquitous schemes of her perfidious enemies. At this remarkable period I finish this relation, where I have laid open, methinks, a scene of as great diversity of incident, interwoven with as surprising escapes amidst the greatest of perils, as have ever, perhaps, happened to any single adventurer. I still continue to act on this grand stage, busied in the execution of a very difficult and laborious scheme; but how the plot will be unravelled, or what further hardships or blessings are prepared for me in the womb of time, is beyond my discovery. Should it please God to preserve my life some years longer for the further services and interests of my sovereign, I shall endeavour to embrace another opportunity of amusing myself, and some few perhaps who may chance to read these papers, with a sequel to this narrative."

But that opportunity never came. This lawless hero of the Seven Years' War soon after fell into disgrace with Maria Theresa. The priests accused him of constant sacrilegious robberies; the finance ministers of not remitting to Vienna the full sums of contribution money levied in Bavaria; his old and untiring enemies of ruthless cruelty in Bavaria, and of having captured the King of Prussia at the battle of Sohr, and then treacherously setting him at liberty. For his tardiness at Sohr, in 1748, Trenck was fined one hundred and twenty thousand florins; still defiant, he was thrown into the arsenal at Vienna, but from thence he escaped by a daring stratagem. Bribing the officer on guard, he feigned death, and was taken to the cemetery; there escaping from his coffin, he flew to Holland with the Baroness de Lestock, who had aided him with gold, and whom he married. Captured again and brought back to Vienna, he was condemned to end his days in Spielberg. There the indomitable and fiery soldier died at only thirty-eight, of poison, administered it is supposed by himself. He left by his will his fortune of two million florins to his cousin, the prison-breaker, but the lawyers gnawed it away till they left but little to inherit.

Trenck was a man of extraordinary strength, and is said to have once cut off a bull's head with a single blow of his sabre. In one of his early campaigns in Hungary, being condemned to death for striking his colonel, he obtained pardon on condition he cut off three Turkish heads, and presently returned from the charge with four heads slung to his saddle-bow. This indomitable man was a good engineer and a fine military theorist, and he spoke almost all the European languages.

WAITING.

Now since we two have counted up the cost
And pain of waiting till our chance is found
(Some broader chance than any we have lost
Must come to meet us as the years go round);
And since we know each heart will stand the test
Of absence and of waiting; since we know
That all love's whirl of passion and unrest,
Was calmed for us by duty long ago.
And since we know the past is past beyond recal,
We must accept the fruit of its mistake;
And trust the dim "to come," to give us all
We dare not covet now for honour's sake.
And till that sure time comes, dear love, we must
In God, in love, and in each other trust.

And it will dawn for us, that happy day,
When love shall overleap whatever lies
Between our lives, and we shall find our way
To joys repaying every sacrifice.
We have so little in the present now,
We have so much to hope from time to come,
We can afford to wait; our true love vow
Binds us for ever, though our lips be dumb.
We take our stand upon each other's faith,
We know each other to be true as steel,
We hold each other's future; life or death
Can neither mar nor alter aught we feel.
We work apart, till love, our harvest's lord,
To reap our fruit together gives the word.

IN THE PIT.

THERE is something to be written about the rise and fall of the pit: its original humbly, its possession for awhile of great authority, and its forfeiture, of late years, of power in the theatre. We all know Shakespeare's opinion of "the groundlings," and how he held them to be, "for the most part, capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise." The great dramatist's contemporaries entertained similar views on this head. They are to be found speaking with supreme contempt of the audience occupying the *yard*; describing them as "fools," and "scarecrows," and "under-standing, grounded men."

Our old theatres were of two classes: public and private. The companies of the private theatres were more especially under the protection of some royal or noble personage. The audiences they attracted were usually of a superior class, and certain

of these were entitled to sit upon the stage during the representation. The buildings, although of smaller dimensions than the public theatres boasted, were arranged with more regard for the comfort of the spectators. The boxes were enclosed and locked. There were *pits* furnished with seats, in place of the *yards*, as they were called, of the public theatres, in which the "groundlings" were compelled to stand throughout the performance. And the whole house was roofed in from the weather; whereas the public theatres were open to the sky, excepting over the stage and boxes. Moreover, the performances at the private theatres were presented by candle or torchlight. Probably it was held that the effects of the stage were enhanced by their being artificially illuminated, for in these times, at both public and private theatres, the entertainments commenced early in the afternoon, and generally concluded before sunset, or, at any rate, before dark.

As patience and endurance are more easy to the man who sits than to the standing spectator, it came to be understood that a livelier kind of entertainment must be provided for the "groundlings" of the public theatres, than there was need to present to the seated pit of the private playhouse. The "fools of the yard" were charged with requiring "the horrid noise of target-fight," "cutler's work," and vulgar and boisterous exhibitions generally. These early patrons of the more practical parts of the drama are entitled to be forbearingly judged, however. Their comfort was little studied, and it is not surprising, then, under the circumstances, that they should have favoured a brisk and vivacious class of representations. The tedious playwright did not merely oppress their minds; he made them remember how weary were their legs.

But it is probable that the tastes thus generated were maintained long, after the necessity for their existence had departed, and that, even when seats were permitted them, the "groundlings" still held by their old forms of amusement, demanding dramas of liveliness, incident, and action, and greatly preferring spectacle to speeches. From the philosophical point of view the pit had acquired a bad name and couldn't or wouldn't get quit of it. Still it is by no means clear that the sentiments ascribed to the pit were not those of the audience generally. The cry of "the decline of the stage" began to be heard almost as soon as the smallest pains were taken with

the accessories of theatrical exhibitions. "The introduction of scenery," writes Mr. Payne Collier, "gives the date to the commencement of the decline of our dramatic poetry." The imagination was no longer appealed to. To the absence of painted canvas we owe many of the finest descriptive passages of Shakespeare, his contemporaries, and followers. But this impeachment of the scene-painter affects also the costumier, and indeed stage illusions of all kinds. The difficulty of defining exactly how much to leave to the imagination, and how far to gratify the eye, is very great indeed, and would seem to be no more soluble now than ever it was.

But the pit was a convenient scapegoat. It was long charged with being a foe to wit and poetry; with preferring sound to sense, and especially with delighting in pageantry and scenic magnificence. Thus Pope, in his *Imitations of Horace*, discourses of the subject:

There still remains to mortify a wit
The many-headed monster of the pit,
A senseless, worthless, and unhonoured crowd,
Who, to disturb their betters mighty proud,
Clattering their sticks before ten lines are spoke
Call for the farce, the bear, or the black joke.

The play stands still; d—n action and discourse,
Back fly the scenes and enter foot and horse.
Pageants on pageants in long order drawn,
Peers, heralds, bishops, ermine, gold, and lawn.
The champion too, and to complete the jest,
Old Edward's armour gleams on Cibber's breast.

It seems that Henry the Eighth had lately been represented, and the play-houses had vied with each other in portraying the pomp and splendour of a coronation. The armour of one of the kings of England had even been borrowed from the Tower to clothe the champion, an important figure in the ceremonial. It is noteworthy that Pope's attack upon spectacle makes no mention of the scenery of the stage. He is too much occupied with the costumes, with "Quin's high plume," the remnant of the "forest of feathers," to which Hamlet refers as the fitting gear of the players, and "Oldfield's petticoat:"

Loud as the wolves on Orcas' stormy steep
Howl to the roarings of the northern deep,
Such is the shout, the long applauding note
At Quin's high plume or Oldfield's petticoat.
Or when from court a birthday suit bestowed
Sinks the lost actor in the tawdry load.
Booth enters—hark! the universal peal!
"But has he spoken?" Not a syllable.
"What shook the stage and made the people stare?"
Cato's long wig, flower'd gown, and lacquer'd chair!

We hear numerous complaints now-a-days of the extravagant garniture of the modern stage, and these may be just and

reasonable enough very likely. It is as well, however, to remember sometimes their ancient date and the prolonged existence they have enjoyed. The first spangle that glittered on the boards probably brought with it the cry against spectacle, and the prediction that the utter ruin of the theatre was of a certainty impending.

But, Pope's diatribe notwithstanding, the pit was improving in character. It could now boast a strong critical leaven; it was becoming the recognised resort of the more enlightened play-goers. Dryden in his prologues and epilogues often addresses the pit, as containing notably the judges of plays and the more learned of the audience. "The pit," says Swift in the introduction to his *Tale of a Tub*, "is sunk below the stage, that whatever of weighty matter shall be delivered thence, whether it be lead or gold, may fall plump into the jaws of certain critics, as I think they are called, which stand ready open to devour them." "Your bucks of the pit," says an old occasional address of later date, ascribed to Garrick, but on insufficient evidence—

Your bucks of the pit are miracles of learning,
Who point out faults to show their own discerning;
And critic-like bestriding martyred sense,
Proclaim their genius and vast consequence.

There were now critics by profession, who duly printed and published their criticisms. The awful Churchill's favourite seat was in the front row of the pit next the orchestra. "In this place he thought he could best discern the real workings of the passions in the actors, or what they substituted in the stead of them," says poor Tom Davies, whose dread of the critic was extreme. "During the run of *Cymbeline*," he wrote apologetically to Garrick, his manager, "I had the misfortune to disconcert you in one scene, for which I did immediately beg your pardon; and did attribute it to my accidentally seeing Mr. Churchill in the pit, with great truth, it rendering me confused and unmindful of my business." Garrick had himself felt oppressed by the gloomy presence of Churchill, and learnt to read discontent in the critic's lowering brows. "My love to Churchill," he writes to Colman; "his being sick of Richard was perceived about the house."

That Churchill was a critic of formidable aspect, the portrait he limned of himself in his *Independence* amply demonstrates:

Fast were his bones, his muscles twisted strong,
His face was short, but broader than 'twas long.
His features though by nature they were large,
Contentment had contrived to overcharge

And bury meaning, save that we might spy
Sense low'ring on the pent-house of his eye;
His arms were two twin oaks, his legs so stout
That they might bear a mansion-house about;
Nor were they, look but at his body there,
Designed by fate a much less weight to bear.
O'er a brown cassock which had once been black,
Which hung in tatters on his brawny back,
A sight most strange and awkward to behold,
He threw a covering of blue and gold, &c. &c.

This was not the kind of man to be contemptuously regarded or indiscreetly attacked. Foote ventured to designate him "the clumsy curate of Clapham," but prudently suppressed a more elaborate lampoon he had prepared. Murphy launched an ode more vehement than decent in its terms. Churchill good-humouredly acknowledged the justice of the satire; he had said, perhaps, all he cared to say to the detriment of Murphy, and was content with this proof that his shafts had reached their mark. Murphy confirms Davies's account of Churchill's seat in the theatre:

No more your hard shall sit
In foremost row before the astonished pit,
And grin dislike, and kiss the spike,
And twist his mouth and roll his head awry,
The arch-absurd quick glancing from his eye.

Charles Lamb was a faithful patron of the pit. In his early days there had been such things as "pit orders." "Beshrew the uncomfortable manager who abolished them!" he exclaims. It was from the front row of the pit that Lamb, seated by the side of his dearly loved sister, applauded the first and hissed the second act of his own farce, *Mr. H—*, an unlucky little play, failing mainly from an inherent weakness of constitution, and yet containing much that is witty and comical.

Hazlitt greatly preferred the pit to the boxes. Not simply because the fierceness of his democratic sentiments induced in him a scorn of the visitors to the boxes, as wrapped up in themselves, fortified against impressions, weaned from all superstitious belief in dramatic illusions, taking so little interest in all that is interesting, disinclined to discompose their cravats or their muscles, "except when some gesticulation of Mr. Kean, or some expression of an author two hundred years old, violated the decorum of fashionable indifference." These were good reasons for his objection to the boxes. But he preferred the pit, in truth, because he could there see and hear so very much better. "We saw Mr. Kean's Sir Giles Overreach on Friday night from the boxes," he writes in 1816, "and are not surprised at the incredulity as to this great actor's powers entertained by those persons who have only

seen him from that elevated sphere. We do not hesitate to say that those who have only seen him at that distance have not seen him at all. The expression of his face is quite lost, and only the harsh and grating tones of his voice produce their full effect on the ear. The same recurring sounds, by dint of repetition, fasten on the attention, while the varieties and finer modulations are lost in their passage over the pit. All you discover is an abstraction of his defects both of person, voice, and manner. He appears to be a little man in a great passion," &c.

But the pit was not famous merely as the resort of critics. The "groundlings" had given place to people of fashion and social distinction. Mr. Leigh Hunt notes that the pit even of Charles the Second's time, although now and then the scene of violent scuffles and brawls, due in great part to the general wearing of swords, was wont to contain as good company as the pit of the Opera House five and twenty years ago. A reference to Pepys's Diary justifies this opinion. "Among the rest here was the Duke of Buckingham to-day openly sat in the pit," records Pepys, "and there I found him with my Lord Buckhurst, and Sedley, and Etheridge the poet." Yet it would seem that already the visitors to the pit had declined somewhat in quality. Concerning a visit to the "Duke of York's Play-House," Pepys writes: "Here a mighty company of citizens' 'prentices and others; and it makes me observe that when I begun first to be able to bestow a play on myself, I do not remember that I saw so many by half of the ordinary 'prentices and mean people in the pit at two shillings and sixpence apiece as now; I going for several years no higher than the shilling, and then the eighteen-penny places, though I strained hard to go in them when I did; so much the vanity and prodigality of the age is to be observed in this particular." Pepys, like John Gilpin's spouse, had a frugal mind, however bent on pleasure. He relates, with some sense of injury, how once, there being no room in the pit, he was forced to pay four shillings and go into one of the upper boxes, "which is the first time I ever sat in a box in my life. And this pleasure I had, that from this place the scenes do appear very fine indeed, and much better than in the pit."

One does not now look to find members of the administration or cabinet ministers occupying seats in the pit. Yet the Journals of the Right Honourable William Windham, some time chief secretary to the

Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and afterwards colonial secretary, tell of his frequent visits to the pit of Covent Garden. Nor does he "drop into" the theatre, after dining at his club, as even a bachelor of fashion might do without exciting surprise. Play-going is not an idle matter to him. And he is accompanied by ladies of distinction, his relatives and others. "Went about half-past five to the pit," he records; "sat by Miss Komble, Stoevens, Mrs. Burke, and Miss Palmer," the lady last named being the niece of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who afterwards married Lord Inchiquin. "Went in the evening to the pit with Mrs. Lukin" (the wife of his half-brother). "After the play, went with Miss Kemble to Mrs. Siddons's dressing-room: met Sheridan there, with whom I sat in the waiting-room, and who pressed me to sup at his house with Fox and G. North." Assuredly "the play," not less than the pit, was more highly regarded in Windham's time than now-a-days.

Though apart from our present topic, it is worth noting that Windham may claim to have anticipated Monsieur Gambetta as a statesman voyaging in a balloon. Ballooning was a hobby of Windham's. He was a regular attendant of ascents, and inspected curiously the early aerial machines of Blanchard and Lunardi. Something surprised at his own temerity, he travelled the air himself, rose in a balloon, probably from Vauxhall, crossed the river at Tilbury, and descended in safety after losing his hat. He regretted that the wind had not been favourable for his crossing the Channel. "Certainly," he writes, "the experiences I have had on this occasion will warrant a degree of confidence more than I have ever hitherto indulged. I would not wish a degree of confidence more than I enjoyed at every moment of the time."

To return to the pit for a concluding note or two. Audiences had come to agree with Hazlitt, that "it was unpleasant to see a play from the boxes," that the pit was far preferable. Gradually the managers—sound sleepers as a rule—awakened to this view of the situation, and proceeded accordingly. They seized upon the best seats in the pit, and converted them into stalls, charging for admission to these a higher price than they had ever levied in regard to the boxes. Stalls were first introduced at the Opera House in the Haymarket in the year 1829. Dissatisfaction was openly expressed, but, although the overture was hissed—the opera being Rossini's *La Donna del Lago*—no serious

disturbance arose. There had been a decline in the public spirit of play-goers. The generation that delighted in the great O. P. riot had pretty well passed away. Such another excitement was not possible; energy and enthusiasm on such a subject seemed to have been exhausted forever by that supreme effort. So the audience paid the increased price or stayed away from the theatre. For staying away from the theatre could now be calmly viewed as a reasonable alternative. "The play" was no more what once it had been, a sort of necessary of life. The example of the Opera manager was presently followed by all other theatrical establishments, and high-priced stalls became the rule everywhere. The pit lost its old influence, was, so to say, disfranchised. It was as one of the old Cinque Ports which the departing sea and the ever indrifting sand have left high and dry, unapproachable by water, a port only in name. It was divided and conquered. The most applauded toast at the public banquet of the O. P. rioters—"The ancient and indisputable rights of the pit"—will never more be proposed.

A Churchill sitting in a modern stall is not a conceivable figure. A new Rosciad would hardly find a publisher or a public. Satire, to make a stir, must lash something that is loved or hated; it is but wasting words, time, and trouble to employ it on a subject the world views with indifference. The spirit of criticism has departed from the theatre. The pit of to-day, penned back beneath the shadow of the boxes, is content to applaud any and everything. The stalls, languid and apathetic, are much what Hazlitt described the boxes of his time to be. They sit apart in the high-priced places, solemn, still, and not too comfortable. For it is the managers' plan—a short-sighted plan, but managers are short-sighted—to deal hardly by their patrons, to wring from them as much as possible, and risk their withdrawing altogether from the scene. Yet there is a fable about killing the goose that lays the golden eggs, and there is a homely proverb, which says, "Once bit, twice shy." The stalls of our theatres are so closely wedged and jammed together, that they can scarcely be reached without a most unseemly and almost painful struggle. The Britannic figure is apt to be substantial, and needs room to move in. Some creature of genius invented a plan of adding a hinge to the seats of the stall-chairs, so that they might be raised upon occasion, and, forming a kind of bay, give more standing room to

the occupant of the stall. The managers forthwith made this scheme an excuse for encroaching on the passage room between the rows of stalls, and crowding in additional seats. It is now required of the occupants of stalls that they should rise up, lift the seats of their chairs, and retire into the recess thus formed in order that others may pass them. The holder of stall number ten, let us say, comes to the theatre a little late. It is incumbent upon the sitters in stalls numbered one to nine to go through this severe drill with their chairs, so that number ten may duly reach his seat. This is simply outrageous. Protests generally are of little avail, but we venture a protest on this head. The most prosperous manager in the end will assuredly be he who, even at some seeming sacrifice of his own interests, does most to make his audience comfortable. The rude, plain, hard benches of the old-fashioned pit are preferable to this modern system. They did not, at any rate, pretend to be luxurious and exclusive, and they were certainly less costly.

A CHINESE FAIRY TALE.

It is a generally admitted fact that people delight chiefly in those arts in which they most excel; and it is also the universal opinion that the reverse of those general laws which apply to the rest of mankind obtain in China. Whether this latter be or be not a "myth of observation," we are not here about to inquire; it will be sufficient for our purpose to say that any one who may expect to find among the Chinese a capacity for story-telling in ratio to their love of stories, will be much disappointed. The same fatality which follows them in many of their arts, seems to brood over their folk-lore. The original want existing, the art reaches a certain point of excellence, and then stops short. Time brings no improvement, and genius produces no further invention. So it is with their stories, they possess a certain and limited stock of incidents, which have become venerable from age, and which every story-teller reproduces over and over again without either addition or improvement, under slightly varying disguises.

Their fairy tales are far more interesting, owing to the large admixture of Aryan legends to be found amongst them; but it cannot be denied that the unalloyed Chinese story of common life is strangely insipid. The plot of nine out of ten such stories repre-

sents the hero as a man of surpassing talent and superhuman strength, who, generally on a journey, meets with a damsel in sore distress at the prospect of a marriage with a rich man whom she hates, but who has placed her father under such obligations as effectually to prevent his refusing to give his sanction to the alliance. The beauty and mental distress of the maiden deeply affect the hero, who proposes the well-worn scheme that on the wedding-day he should play the part of the young lady, and in the recesses of the bridal chamber murder the bridegroom, and any of the groomsmen who might oppose the proceeding. The bride and her parents eagerly enter into the plot. On the wedding-day the exchange of dresses is effected, and when her rich lover, with passionate embraces, attempts to remove the veil from his supposed bride, the hero draws his sword and with one blow severs his head from his body. The noise attracts the servants and friends to the room, all of whom the hero slays without receiving a wound, and he returns to the house of the rescued damsel, with the noses of his victims tied up in his pocket-handkerchief as proofs of his prowess. In exchange for these trophies the heroine writes him a copy of verses of such undoubtedly Confucian complexion, that he instantly proposes marriage, is accepted, and they live happily ever after. Such is the favourite plot of a native story; of course it admits of variations: the would-be bridegroom is an oppressive mandarin who uses all kind of official artifices to gain his object, or he is a bandit chieftain who has made himself the terror of his neighbourhood. But whatever else may change, the valour of the hero and the beauty of the heroine, and the lofty poetic talent of both, are never made to vary either in kind or degree.

Having, then, once read a story of this description, none but Chinamen would wish to listen to any more. To them, however, the typical hero is a never-failing object of admiration and delight. His bombastic folly sends a thrill through the frame of every listener, and the twaddling prolixity of the narrative is viewed as a triumph of eloquence. But in their fairy tales there is much more that is worthy of attention. Being for the most part borrowed from the folk-lore of more western nations, they become objects of interest to occidentals. Comparative mythology, and Jón's stories themselves have much in them to attract the general reader. In many of

however, there is observable that

want, on the part of their adapters, of perceptive power to catch the real points of the stories. They are told, in too many cases, just as a child might be supposed to repeat a tale he has heard for the first time. The leading incidents stand out in isolated prominence, and there is a total absence of the finer traits and more artistic touches which are essential to a good story.

Having said this much, we invite our readers' attention to the following narrative. Without attempting to supply any deficiencies, or to round off any corners, we give the story as it was penned by the Chinese writer some seven hundred years ago, and will only add that it is supposed to refer to the period when Charlemagne sat on the throne of France.

Many years ago, during the Tang dynasty, there lived in the town of Peen-chow an old maid, named San. No one knew where she came from. All that her neighbours could say about her was, that for the last thirty years she had kept the cake shop on the wooden bridge, and that during the whole of that time she had lived quite by herself, employing neither man-servant nor maid-servant, nor had any relative been known to visit her. But notwithstanding this, report pronounced her to be rich. Her house was a large one, and she had mules in abundance. In order to save her guests part of the local carriage-tax, she made it a practice not to receive their equipages, a proceeding which was highly approved of by them, and in consequence, of those who had once put up at her hostelry, many repeated their visits. Now it happened that, about this time, the Emperor "Great Harmony" sent General Chaou, surnamed the "Slender and Kind One," on an expedition to the eastern capital, and the general, passing through Peen-chow with his six or seven servants, put up for the night at the shop on the wooden bridge. The servants were soon accommodated in a common room, and the "Slender and Kind One" was lodged in a separate apartment adjoining the dwelling-rooms of San. San paid the greatest attention to her guests, and when night came on, served them with wine and helped them to drink it, making merry with all. The "Slender and Kind One" alone abstained from tasting the wine, but joined in the talking and laughing. When the watchman announced the second watch, and when most of her guests were sleeping the sleep of drunkards, San betook herself to her domicile, barred the door, and put out the light. In the middle of the night,

as the "Slender and Kind One" lay tossing from this side to that side, unable to sleep, he heard a noise in San's room as though she were moving things about. His curiosity being excited, he peeped through a crevice and saw her light a candle and take out from a cloth-bound box a plough, a little wooden man, and a little wooden ox, each about six or seven inches high, and put them down in front of the fireplace. She then poured water on them, and they instantly began to move and live. The little man harnessed the little ox to the plough, and set to work ploughing up the part of the room in front of the bed. When he had prepared enough ground, San gave him a sackful of wheat, which he sowed. In a very few minutes it sprouted through the ground and grew up until it flowered, brought forth fruit, and ripened. The man then set to work to reap and thrash it, and presented to his mistress a crop of seven or eight pints of grain. This done, he was made to grind the corn in a small mill, and was then thrown, with his ox and his plough, into the box again. San now began her share of the work, and having well kneaded the flour, transformed it into baked cakes. At cock-crow the soldiers began to bestir themselves, but San was up before them, and had lighted their lamp and laid out the hot cakes in tempting array on the table. The "Slender and Kind One" was not very comfortable after what he had seen and heard, so he went outside the house, but, determined to see the end, he peeped through a crevice in the door. Suddenly, while he was watching his soldiers seated in a circle, in the act of devouring the nice hot cakes, he heard a sound as of neighing, and to his horror he saw them in an instant all transformed into mules. The change was no sooner effected than San drove them into the yard at the back of the shop.

The "Slender and Kind One" told no one what he had seen, but pondered much over the adventure in secret, and when at the end of a month he was returning by the same road, he again put up at the shop on the wooden bridge. But before entering the inn he provided himself with a number of cakes, in size and form exactly like those he had seen so miraculously made. San professed herself delighted to see him, and, as he was the solitary guest, lavished attentions on him. When night came she diligently inquired his wishes. "I have business before me," said the "Slender and Kind One," "therefore call me at day-break." "Without fail," said San; "but

please to sleep soundly." About midnight the "Slender and Kind One" arose, and witnessed a repetition of what he had seen on the previous occasion. In the morning San was up early, and having laid out her guest's breakfast, she set before him the hot cakes he knew so well. While, however, she was away getting other things, the "Slender and Kind One" managed to exchange one of the cakes he had brought with him for one of San's, and apologising to her, said he had supplied himself with cakes of his own, and therefore should not want any of hers. San waited attentively on her guest, and when he had finished eating, brought him his tea. The "Slender and Kind One," then addressing her, said, "Let me beg my hostess to try one of my cakes," at the same time handing the one he had taken in exchange for his own. San accepted it with thanks, but had hardly tasted it when she fell down to the ground neighing, and was instantly transformed into a fine strong mule. The "Slender and Kind One" saddled her, and then went to search for the little wooden man and ox. He found them, but not knowing the spell, could do nothing with them. So he mounted the mule and returned home. His new acquisition carried him remarkably well, and made nothing of going one hundred miles a day. Four years after these events, the "Slender and Kind One" was riding on his mule to the Hwa yo Temple; he passed an old man at the side of the road, who, on seeing him, clapped his hands and laughing, said, "Why San of the wooden bridge, how is it that you have come to this?" Then taking hold of the mule he said to the "Slender and Kind One," "Although she was originally very much to blame, she has since done you good service, have pity on her, and allow me to set her free." With that he opened the mule's cheek, and out jumped the old maid, looking the same as ever. Then turning to the old man, she made him a grateful curtsy and walked off. What became of her I don't know.

GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S NARRATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THAT STATE OF LIFE," &c.

IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IV.

"LUTTRELL," said the squire, turning to me as soon as the dog-cart was out of sight, "I hope that Harry's sudden departure will make no difference in the length of your visit to us. Remember that the longer you can remain with us the better pleased we shall be."

I thanked him, and said it would give me great pleasure to stay on a little longer at the Grange.

In the course of the morning I saw Assunta walking alone in the garden. I joined her. "This is an unfortunate affair," I began. "Harry's imprudence last night did more mischief than we were aware of."

"My poor Harry! my poor boy!" she sighed. "Ah! Mr. Luttrell, but that was not the real cause of his being sent away. If it had not been for me he would have been scolded for his impertinence to Mr. Ridgway, and there would have been an end of it. It is I who have driven him away."

"No, it is his speaking as he did to his uncle. The most ordinary caution and a sense of what was due to Mr. Walbrooke would have obviated it. But there is no use in crying over spilt milk. You must not be too cast down by what has occurred. If Harry can only be got to restrain himself for the future, all will be well in time, I have no doubt. That he will remain faithful to you I am very sure; and I believe in the accomplishment of almost anything on earth with time and perseverance."

"Time? Ah! but youth so soon flies, and life itself is very short. Will he care for me when I am old and withered? Then perhaps he may be free to marry me."

"But fond of you as all are here," I said, "and with the influence you have in the family, Mr. Walbrooke will certainly yield, sooner or later, when he finds that Harry's whole happiness depends on it."

She shook her head. "You do not know him, nor does Harry, as I do. Look at Beauty there in the park, Mr. Luttrell. She is Mr. Walbrooke's favourite mare. He goes to her stall every morning, and feeds her with carrots. She may run where she likes, provided she does not jump this fence, and get into the garden. Oh! then she would be very quickly driven out. Harry's heart is their garden. I may do what I like except enter there. But they can't keep me out—they can't!" she repeated with a triumphant energy, at variance with the despondency with which she had hitherto spoken.

"Then you ought to be happy," I said, with an involuntary sigh. "All the rest is, comparatively, of no importance."

She looked up with her dark earnest face into mine. "But I must not be his ruin. He must not sacrifice everything to me. Oh! Mr. Luttrell, no one will ever

know how I fought against this love at first, seeing what it must come to! And now, what am I to do? I ask myself, what am I to do?"

"Nothing. Just wait, and trust to time. To you, dear Miss Fleming, and to Harry also, this is my first word and my last."

Two days went by. Mr. Ridgway's assiduities, uninterrupted now by the jealousy of Harry, seemed to increase. Assunta was a little graver, but otherwise appeared in company much as usual. The third morning a card of invitation appeared on the breakfast table, which gave rise to an animated discussion. There had for some time past been a talk of a fancy ball at Hevoir Castle. It was now something more than rumour; the day fixed was just three weeks distant. Lena, who was of course not yet "out," had been promised by her uncle that she should go to this exceptional entertainment, which, being given in a fine old baronial building, promised to be a spectacle of great brilliancy. Mr. Ridgway and I were referred to, to suggest dresses; but as he knew far more about the correct costume of various epochs than I did, my help was limited to a few arrangements of colour, and to making a sketch from recollection of a female portrait by some Italian of the fifteenth century, the head-gear of which, it occurred to me, would suit Assunta. Mr. Ridgway at once supplied every deficient detail; he had a Giorgione at Hapsbury with a similar costume, which he sent for, together with a great variety of old Venetian and Genoese stuffs, which he begged Miss Fleming to make use of. Nor did his generosity stop short here, in which case it would no doubt have been declined. Among his treasures was a dress in rare preservation, which had belonged to Marie Antoinette when a girl. It was a sort of Dresden-china-shepherdess attire, with wreaths of delicately embroidered roses on a blue ground. It fitted Lena's narrow little body as if it had been made for her; and the commode and sacque became her slender dimensions vastly. As for myself, money was a great consideration to me at that time, as he possibly guessed; and when Mr. Walbrooke insisted upon my remaining over the ball, Ridgway good-naturedly bethought him of a muleteer's dress which he had brought from Spain, and which he begged me to wear. Of infinite resource, helpful, ever kind, why was it I could not like this man?

Shortly after this he went home, but he

was to return for the ball, Hevoir Castle being only four miles from the Grange. He had, I think, by this time, almost, if not definitely, made up his mind to propose to Assunta; but a little delay could do no harm. And at this moment the important subject of his costume demanded a good deal of attention. The night before his departure a slight incident occurred which I remember made an impression on me, and which may have influenced the destinies of those about whom I am writing more than was apparent.

In addition to the guests in the house, Mr. Walbrooke had invited some distant neighbours to dinner. There was a large party; in all, five-and-twenty. Among them was a Sir Robert Something and his daughters, who had lately returned from Italy, where he had lived many years for the education of his children. He was a poor but very proud man, whose character stood high in the county, but whose manners were not pleasing. Mr. Walbrooke was not intimate with him. He lived too near the Grange to be invited to stay there, and yet a long hill and bleak moor interfered with constant intercourse. Indeed, this was the first time he had ever dined at the Grange, I believe, having, when his daughters were children, declined all such doubtful pleasures as an eight-mile drive to a country dinner-party. I should add that his house lay in precisely the opposite direction to Hapsbury.

I was standing behind the outer circle of chairs and ottomans, as awkward young Englishmen do before dinner, near to no one I knew, and consequently at liberty to watch my neighbours' movements. Not far off sat Mr. Ridgway, next to Assunta, but less talkative than usual, it appeared to me. I should almost have said that he was not perfectly at his ease, if that had been possible of a man whom, it was proverbial, nothing ever put out. At all events, I knew, by the rapid movement of his cold blue eye from time to time, that he was on the alert to listen to all that went on around him. The guests were now all arrived; several introductions took place. Presently Mr. Walbrooke, taking Sir Robert's arm, drew him out of the circle, and, as he believed, no doubt, out of ear-shot.

"I don't think you know Ridgway, of Hapsbury, do you?" I heard him ask. "The other side of the county, you know."

"Who?" said Sir Robert, with a surprise which, if assumed, did credit to his acting.

"Ridgway, the great man of taste, one of the cleverest fellows you ever met, who——"

"So I have heard. No, I don't know him, *and I had rather not.*"

The emphasis is not mine, but his. He spoke those words so distinctly that I have not a doubt but that the subject of this colloquy heard them. Sir Robert throughout the evening avoided even the side of the room where Mr. Ridgway was. And Mr. Walbrooke's obstinacy was wounded even more than his friendship. I doubt if the baronet was ever asked to the Grange again. But those words left their mark.

I wrote to Harry very fully of all that happened. He was now at Oxford, and, having passed a dreary time of it with his old aunt, was in a condition to appreciate his return to college and to the society of his friends. Certainly his spirits rose. When I wrote to him touching the ball at Hevoir, instead of replying in the despondent strain he had assumed of late, he answered, with gay impudence, that he hoped Assunta would look her very best, and take as much pains with her appearance as if he were to be present.

"What a coxcomb he is getting," said I, laughing.

She smiled rather sadly. "Is it coxcombry to speak the truth?" He knows it is as he says. I should only care to look well to be seen by him."

His letters to her, of course, I never saw. He wrote constantly, and she fed upon his words in secret, quoting a passage to me now and then, but that she was not at ease concerning him I well knew. The love that enters into the heart of a woman like Assunta is not blind; it is a mistake to paint him so.

CHAPTER V.

THE night of the ball arrived at last. When Assunta appeared in the drawing-room before our departure, there was a universal exclamation. She had never looked so handsome before. She certainly never looked so handsome again. She wore the dress in which I made the sketch of her, my friend, which you possess. Some persons gain by rare clothes, carrying any unusual garments with a natural grace, as if accustomed to them. Assunta was of this number, and so was Mr. Ridgway. In its way his was, perhaps, the greatest triumph of the evening. As Louis the Fifteenth, in a dress of lemon-coloured satin and silver, with the legitimate aids of powder, rouge, and patches, he might have

passed for a man of thirty. His light figure and well-turned leg showed to great advantage in the courtly costume of that epoch of frippery, and he carried his three-cornered hat, his snuff-box, and his jewelled cane with an ease which contrasted pleasantly with the crowd of awkward cavaliers, disconsolate, and apparently much ashamed of themselves, under curly wigs, broad hats and plumes, and whose swords were always coming into disastrous propinquity with their legs.

As we entered the ball-room I heard one old lady say to another :

"That is the girl, that handsome one in the odd dress."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed the other. "How sad! How can her friends sacrifice her thus? She is very handsome."

"Yes; but her birth, you see. And she is quite dependent upon the Walbrookes. It is a very great marriage for a girl in her position to make. I know more than one who tried for it. After all, he is a charming man; there's no denying it; so much taste. And I dare say all those horrid stories are false. Depend upon it, when he is once married they will be forgotten."

I heard no more. The crowd closed between us, and I passed on. It was a brilliant pageant, the first and last sight of the kind I have ever seen. It is all before me very distinctly now. Of what use to describe it? such scenes are familiar to you; and if I had the magic power to make it rise up before your eyes it would not impress you as it did the raw youth to whom it seemed the embodiment of a hundred brilliant pictures, the figures standing out upon a rich subdued background of tapestry, carved oak, and stone.

Assunta did not dance much. She attracted a good deal of attention, as much by the rumours that were afloat as by her beauty, I doubt not. And Mr. Ridgway justified these rumours by scarcely leaving her side. If he had hesitated hitherto he did so no longer. She had been submitted to the test of public opinion, and that many-tongued voice was almost unanimous in deciding her to be not only very handsome, but unusually distinguished in carriage and manner. The fastidious "man of taste" was satisfied. I thought I read all this in the open proclamation of his devotion which he made; there could be no doubt, for there was no disguise, about the fact. Others were to be warned off these premises. Assunta was, I am sure, unconscious that her name was coupled with Mr. Ridgway's, and listened, as she always did, to him

with attention, replying sometimes with a smile, sometimes with a word, sometimes a little wearily perhaps. By-and-bye a fat, gossiping woman came up, and whispered a word or two in her ear, accompanied by shrewd nods and becks. Assunta coloured crimson, and from that moment I saw that she was ill at ease, and made an effort to get away from her admirer. She changed her seat, she consented to dance, she asked me to take her into the refreshment-room; but whenever she returned to the neighbourhood of Mrs. Walbrooke, there was Ridgway. I stood exactly opposite, where I could watch every movement of her countenance, and between us was the entrance door of the ball-room.

It was past twelve o'clock, and the revel was at its height, when, looking at Assunta, I saw her eyes fastened upon this door, through which a great crowd was streaming, with an expression of wonderment, joy, and terror, such as I could not account for. At that moment the crowd gave way a little, and I beheld Harry! Harry, whom we all believed to be a hundred miles away, and hoped was imbibing wisdom from the breast of Alma Mater. It took away my breath; but I pushed my way to him as fast as I could. Before I could reach him, however, he had joined the little group, where Assunta sat near Mrs. Walbrooke, and Mr. Walbrooke and Lena were standing. As to Mr. Ridgway, he had sauntered down the room with the cautious carelessness of a man who knows how to extricate himself from an awkward position. The reception Harry met with was characteristic of the various members of his uncle's family.

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. Walbrooke. "How very odd! Where did you spring from, Harry? And such a beautiful dress. Very becoming, too. What is it? Oh, a hunting-dress of George the First. Charming! So very nice. You didn't come in it all the way from Oxford, did you?"

"Oh, you darling duck!" exclaimed the Dresden shepherdess, jumping up, and standing on tip-toe, in an ineffectual effort to reach his cheek with her pretty lips. "How glad I am. It seems an age since we saw you. You look just like an angel in powder, going out hunting; doesn't he Assunta? How good of you to come. What fun! This is the one thing that was wanting to make the ball perfect."

Assunta said nothing. I thought he looked disappointed; yet her eyes were more eloquent than any words.

"What mad freak has brought you here,

Harry?" asked his uncle, with knit brows. "Have you got leave? If not, you will be rusticated, or get into a terrible scrape, at all events."

"No," replied Harry; "certain little circumstances prevented my getting leave, so I came off without it. I shall be able to say with truth that I did not sleep out of Oxford. You see I only miss to-morrow's prayers. I was present this morning, and set off in my tandem as soon as they were over, took the stage after five-and-twenty miles, which brought me a good part of the way. The remainder of the journey I performed in any rattletrap I could pick up from one village to another, until I found myself at the King's Head, close to this, an hour ago. I return in the same way, as soon as the ball is over. I calculated all the costs," added Harry, laughing; "and I thought it was worth it."

"H'm!" grunted Mr. Walbrooke; "I don't know what your calculations are like. It will cost you, or rather me, fifty pounds, if it costs a penny."

"Well, Uncle Jack, we'll set that down in the place of my whist, which you complained of. At all events, this is a harmless amusement, and will entail no worse consequences than a wiggling."

"I don't know that. I am not so sure of its being harmless," muttered the squire, but in so low a tone, that Harry, who had turned to Assunta, did not hear him. Harry bent a little over her, so that his words were inaudible; then presently he stood erect, and I heard him ask her to give him the dance which was just beginning. Mr. Walbrooke fidgeted, and looked round the room, and at the same moment Mr. Ridgway came up.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Fleming; I think this is our quadrille."

She had risen, and had actually taken Harry's arm. Mr. Ridgway smiled at Harry with a polite bow. Harry repaid it with a freezing nod. She coloured, and was sorely perplexed.

"You will excuse Miss Fleming. She has just promised me this dance," said Harry.

"She forgot that she was engaged," interrupted Mr. Walbrooke, quickly. "She cannot, of course, give up a prior engagement."

Harry, glaring and fuming on one side, Mr. Ridgway, bland but inexorable on the other, resolved not to relinquish his rights, nor yield an inch of his ground; between them Assunta looked sadly distressed. Justice was so manifestly on the one side, that

she felt she must yield, or mortally offend Mr. Walbrooke, and harm both Harry and herself perhaps irreparably. With a look of supplication up at him, she at last disengaged her arm, and placed it in Mr. Ridgway's. They walked away, and Harry's face, so beaming five minutes before, was now black as thunder. He said nothing, but his eyes followed them as they took their places in the quadrille, and his nostrils dilated as he watched the very ostentatious devotion of Assunta's partner. Now Mr. Ridgway bent down, and whispered something witty—about their vis-à-vis, perhaps—for Assunta, in spite of her annoyance, could not help smiling; now he was examining her bouquet, and telling some very long story, in that confidential manner which in itself looks like an avowal to the spectators.

Just then ill-luck brought one of Harry's numerous friends, a coarse, tactless fellow, past where we were standing. Seeing the direction in which Harry's gloomy face was turned, the man stopped, and catching hold of Harry's arm, with a laugh, cried in a hoarse whisper, which pierced through violins and clarionets, "So your nose is put out of joint in that quarter, eh, Walbrooke? I hear it's all settled. I don't envy the girl. However, that's her look out. Ha! ha!"

Harry made no reply; one would have said that he had not heard the words, but for the way in which he changed colour, and turned away sharply. The man passed on, and Harry's bitterness at last found vent in words.

"So it's a settled thing is it, Geoff? Well, it was worth coming from Oxford to know this. What a fool a man is ever to trust a woman!"

"What a fool you are, Harry, to let your jealousy blind you in this way, and to listen to the gossip of an idiot like that! There is not a word of truth in what he, or any one else, says about this."

"How do you know? She is not likely to tell you. Look at them there. No one can say there isn't some ground for the report! Why did she dance with him if she doesn't encourage him?"

"How could she help it when she was engaged? And if she had refused him at first, of course she could have danced with no one all the night."

"She should have thrown him over. If she had cared for me she would."

"And have made your uncle furious, and have done you both incalculable mischief! How foolish you are, Harry, not to

see that all your endeavour now should be to conciliate him."

"I can't say I feel much inclined to try," said Harry, between his teeth, "when I see him doing all he can to ruin my happiness. But there's no use standing here. Let us come into the supper-room, Geoff. I've had nothing to drink, and I'm as thirsty as the devil."

There was a knot of young fellows there drinking champagne, who greeted Harry very warmly (as, indeed, did every one we met). Those were the days when men did drink at country balls; I know not what they may do now; and soon, to my vexation, he was trying to drown his troubles in the bottle, and assuming a gaiety which I knew was far from real. I dreaded, and with good reason, the effect of much wine on him in his present excited state; and as I watched the wild recklessness with which he tossed off tumbler after tumbler, I hesitated whether it would not be well to fetch Mr. Walbrooke, whose remonstrances might have more weight than mine. The fear of doing more harm than good—if Harry should forget himself in speaking, as he had once done, to his uncle—deterred me; but I would not leave him, and urged him, whenever I could make myself heard, to return with me to the ball-room. A long half-hour passed thus, and it became evident to me that the wine was beginning to take effect; the dull glitter of the eye told its tale; the hand that raised the glass was less steady.

"Why were you not out with us, yesterday, Walbrooke?" said a man who had just come in. "A glorious run of five-and-forty minutes without a check."

"He wasn't here. He was having an inglorious run—away from Oxford," laughed another.

"Oh! Ah! by-the-bye, I heard Ridgway say just now—"

"What did you hear him say?" asked Harry, fiercely.

"Oh! he was only chaffing, in that sarcastic way of his, about your being packed off to school, a month ago, for getting screwed—and that, now you had run away, your uncle was going to send the naughty little boy back to get a whipping."

"He said that, did he?" Harry ground his teeth. "Some one else will get a d—d good whipping, I can tell him, if he doesn't look out."

"Oh! he was only joking, my dear fellow."

"I will teach Mr. Ridgway not to joke

about me," cried Harry, filling his glass again.

"Take care, Walbrooke. Though he's such an effeminate-looking fellow, I'm told he is not to be trifled with. They say that he really killed a man in Italy."

"If he did, it was behind his back!" and Harry gave a contemptuous laugh. "He has not pluck to stand up in a fair fight, or I'd have a round with him in the court-yard. A sneaking scoundrel, who palavers one to one's face, and stabs one with his tongue when one isn't present to give him the lie!"

It was at this moment that Assunta entered the room upon Ridgway's arm. The quadrille had been long since over, and Assunta, who, during the dance, had caught sight of Harry's lowering face from time to time in the crowd, and had then suddenly missed it, had sat down, as I afterwards learnt from her, a prey to serious anxiety about him. Where was he? Why did he not come to her? Surely he was not so unreasonable as not to forgive her for leaving him? And where was Mr. Walbrooke? She prayed to Heaven that he and Harry might be having no altercation! This nervous terror at last got the better of every other consideration. She would sooner have asked any one in the room to give her an arm than Mr. Ridgway; but no one else was near, and she could bear this suspense no longer. Under the pretext that she wanted a glass of water, she asked him to take her through the rooms. No doubt Mr. Ridgway divined the cause of this sudden thirst; and perhaps a shrewd suspicion of where and how they would find Harry made him nothing loth to assist in the search.

"Ah! here is our young friend," he whispered, as they entered the supper-room. "Very jovial, I see, wine-cup in hand. He should have come as Bacchus; only wants the thyrsus and ivy-wreath. And such an abundant flow of words, too! He might have played the part of his own magpie. The magpie, you know, Miss Fleming, was dedicated to the god of wine."

"Mr. Ridgway," said Harry, advancing with no very steady gait, and with a flaming face, "will you be good enough to repeat before me what you have been saying of me behind my back?"

"Harry, Harry! for Heaven's sake!" murmured Assunta.

"Perhaps you will reconduct Miss Fle-

ming to the ball-room, and then meet me in the court-yard to give me this explanation," continued Harry.

Mr. Ridgway shrugged his shoulders, with a smile.

"I have none to give, my dear young gentleman. I paid you a pretty compliment just now, in saying you were god-like, with that wine-cup in your hand. Bacchus was a gentleman—it was only his satyrs who were boisterous and vulgar," added Mr. Ridgway, with a little drawl.

"You have been turning me into ridicule, then, for Miss Fleming's amusement, also, have you?" roared Harry, who was now fairly beside himself.

"Harry, dear Harry! pray—" supplicated Assunta, taking his arm; but it seemed as if her voice, on this occasion, only maddened him the more.

"I am like Bacchus—am I? There shall be one point of resemblance the less very quickly. The wine shall no longer be in my hand. I'll make you a present of it."

And so saying, he raised his arm, and would have dashed the champagne full in Mr. Ridgway's face, but that the glass was struck from his hand at the same moment, and shivered on the floor. A few drops only did, in their transit, reach the sleeve of Mr. Ridgway's yellow satin coat. It was Mr. Walbrooke, who, in the very nick of time, had arrived on the scene to avert what must have led to a terrible catastrophe. Alas! would it not have been better to have let Fate work her will then, instead of holding her hand for a time? We, in our short-sightedness, regarded it then as a mercy: I cannot do so now.

That scene is before me still; Harry, like some wild animal held at bay, between Assunta and Mr. Walbrooke; Ridgway, with admirable coolness, wiping the splashes from his sleeve with a laced handkerchief, the circle of silent spectators—I see it all. The mad boy was at length dragged away by his uncle and Assunta; vociferating loudly, and calling upon Mr. Ridgway to fight him, when and where he liked. I thought it better to stay, and plead what extenuation I could for Harry.

"Our young friend," said Mr. Ridgway, with a light laugh, in reply to my excuse that a little wine quite turned Harry's head, and rendered him unaccountable for his actions, "our young friend has not studied drinking as a fine art. Do you remember what Rabelais says? 'Boyre simplement et ab-

solument . . . aussi bien boyvent les bestes.' This young gentleman may be said to drink 'absolument,' eh? much as the carps do. 'Twere vain to expect much more self-control in him than in them."

"I hope you will forgive him, Mr. Ridgway," I said.

"Oh, dear, yes;" but though he smiled, there was an expression in his eye which struck me unpleasantly, and which I thought of long after. "Not that he will apologise, Mr. Luttrell. A man needs to be a gentleman to own himself in the wrong. But I am glad he did not throw the wine in my face, because I suppose the conventional laws of society would have obliged me to call him out, which I had rather not do. As it is—suppose we have some of this aspic de volaille? I declare I am quite hungry."

In the course of time Mr. Walbrooke rejoined us.

"Ridgway," he began, "I am more grieved and ashamed of my nephew's conduct than I can express to you. I believe I have brought him to some sense of shame, himself. At all events, when he is really sober (which he will not be for some time), I feel sure that he will deplore his behaviour this evening. If I did not know you to be one of the kindest and most forbearing of men, I should not know how to ask you to return with us to the Grange. Our scapegrace, however, will not be there—he returns to Oxford at once."

"He will not shake hands with me, I suppose?" Mr. Ridgway smiled sweetly. "He will not afford me the gratification of forgiving him? Well, well, my dear Walbrooke, he is right. He knows the bitter farce of that inducement to forgive a man, 'by so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.' Though scriptural, not quite charitable, eh? Who can be expected to empty the coal-box on his own head? No, the least said in this matter the soonest mended; and when Master Harry and I next meet, it will be quite forgotten."

The squire said little more on the subject, but began to talk of going home: it was two o'clock, and Lena was unused to late hours, and Mrs. Walbrooke was tired, and it was a cold night—and—in short, a number of transparent pretexts for avoiding the possibility of another collision between the belligerents. The poor little shepherdess, who was ignorant of all that had been going on, was in despair at the summons, being engaged for the next two dances; but no one ever attempted to

appeal against a fiat of Mr. Walbrooke's. I volunteered to look for Miss Fleming, while the squire sent his servant to the stables for the carriage; but I had not proceeded far on my search, before Harry's uncle overtook me.

"Mr. Luttrell, I cannot trust myself to speak to that boy again to-night. His conduct has exasperated me beyond endurance. Over and above his insolence to Mr. Ridgway, he has thought fit to question my conduct in a way I will not stand. He chooses to fancy himself in love with Miss Fleming, and to resent the fact of any one else's paying her any attention. Now I wish you to convey this message to him from me. Until he promises me that this absurd folly shall cease, I do not mean him to return to the Grange. I will not be subject to a recurrence of such scenes as to-night's—or such insolence as obliged me to send him from the Grange. When he can behave himself properly, and will express some contrition for his conduct, I will receive him, and not before. He has his allowance, and can spend the vacation where he pleases. Be good enough to tell him that from me."

I found them together in a deserted room at the end of the suite, standing by an open window. It was a clear frosty night, which, under ordinary circumstances, would not have invited the admission of more air than necessary. But Assunta, regardless of herself, had opened the window; for Harry's head was burning, and she believed that the keen sharpness of the night would restore him sooner than anything. What had passed between them, I knew not, but that he had forgotten all his jealous suspicions of her, was clear. Their hands were linked together, and they stood there like two sorrowful children, silent, with the traces of tears upon their cheeks, looking out into the deep peaceful sky, lit by its myriad stars.

"You are summoned, Miss Fleming," I said, "and you and Harry had better say good-bye here, for the squire does not wish to see him again to-night. If you remain here, Harry, I will return to you, and find my way back to the Grange somehow."

Poor young hearts! Had either of them a foreboding of the future when they bade each other that farewell? I only know that Assunta's face was white and rigid as

the face of death when she joined me in the next room—for I had sauntered away from them. She said not a word. We found Mrs. Walbrooke in the bustle of cloaking. Ten minutes afterwards they drove off, and I returned to Harry. We had a long conversation, which it is needless to repeat here. I told him, as gently as I could, the substance of his uncle's words, and implored him to exercise a little discretion in his communications with Mr. Walbrooke. The squire was greatly incensed, I said, and infinite tact would be required to adjust matters; one false step, one hasty letter, might prove irreparable.

He was sober enough now, and seemed heartily ashamed, less of his behaviour to Ridgway than of having unjustly suspected Assunta, and of having allowed himself to be drunk in her presence. "I suppose," he said sadly, "the doors of the old house will be shut against me now for a time. I will write nothing, if I can help it, to offend my uncle: I promise you, Geoff, to be discreet, and on paper I think I can be, better than in talking. But if he expects," he added, with a rekindling of the old fiery pride, "if he expects that I am going to truckle to him for his money, if he expects to get any promise out of me about Assunta, he is mistaken. I will never say or do anything to lead him to suppose that I give her up. It's as much as I shall be able to do to keep silent, knowing that that scoundrel is constantly near her, and that it is my uncle's doing."

I walked with him, under the star-lit sky, to the King's Head; I helped him to stuff his fine clothes into a valise, and don something more suitable to a journey through England in this nineteenth century. Then a dog-cart came round to the inn-door: Harry wrung my hand, jumped on the seat, and drove away in the frosty night; the lamps sending weird lights upon the hedge, on either side, which were visible for half a mile along the straight and level road.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER IX. SIRETÆ INJURIA FORMÆ.

THE revelation which Mrs. Entwistle made to Gerald Hardinge of the relationship in which she stood towards him, was as gratifying as it was unexpected. For not merely was he fond of the woman to whom he owed his pleasant position in life, with that real affection which springing from gratitude is one of the purest of human passions, but, worldly philosopher as he was, he found in the announcement a balm for certain stings of conscience which had occasionally pricked him.

The fact was, that of late there had risen in Gerald Hardinge's mind a doubt whether the easy and luxurious life he was then leading, provided for by the kindness of one upon whom he had no claim of kinship, was either an honourable or a desirable one. It was all very well at first, when the circumstances of the position were widely different. Then, smarting under a sense of degradation at his treatment by Madge Pierrepont, he had cared little what became of him; and when he found that the patron by whom his earliest pictures were bought, and to whom the London agent introduced him immediately on his arrival, was an old lady instead of an old gentleman, as he had been led to believe, he felt it mattered but little for whom he worked, so long as he obtained adequate remuneration. The use to which the money thus acquired was to be put, varied according to his temperament. At one time he determined to spend it in searching for Madge and inducing her to reconsider her

hasty determination; at another he would decide to finally abandon any further thought of his quondam sweetheart, and only hope that some day, seeing him in his glory, she might be able to form some idea of what she had lost by her treacherous conduct.

Then came the time when taking up his abode in Mrs. Entwistle's house (temporarily, as it was understood, for the purpose of elaborating some drawings under her personal superintendence), he gradually suffered Madge to fade out of his thoughts, and becoming by degrees accustomed to his new life, taught himself the facile creed, that Art is a coy goddess, declining to appear whenever she may be invoked, and only rendering herself visible at certain times and seasons, not to be calculated upon beforehand. This meant, of course, nothing more nor less than that being brought into constant contact with nothing-doing people, with time and money at their disposal, Gerald had become inoculated with the charm of the lives they led, and that he only resorted to his canvas and brushes in default of more pleasant pastime. In this idleness he was encouraged by Mrs. Entwistle, who gradually inducted him into the position of her representative during her lifetime, her heir after her death, and by the examples of his companions, who could not understand any other mode of life than that which they led.

Nevertheless, from time to time a feeling of shame crept over him as he remembered how actively he had been engaged at his outset in life, when his very existence depended on his own exertions, and when he contrasted the hard-won independence of those days with the purposeless and easy life which he now led. And so far had those

feelings wrought upon him, that he had come to a resolution, the first-fruits of which were visible in his remonstrance with Mrs. Entwistle, against her declared intention of leaving him all her property.

A naturally indolent young man, who has for some time been accustomed to have all his wishes fulfilled without any cost or trouble to himself, is, however, a bad subject for self-reform, and it is probable that Gerald Hardinge would have salved his conscience with the fact of his kinship to his benefactor being sufficient excuse for his position in her house, had not his mind been entirely taken up with another subject springing out of the same revelation. His mother! Here at last was an opportunity for which he had sought so often when first driven from his father's roof, but which of late years he had completely forgotten, of endeavouring to learn the history of his mother's early married life, and of ridding her memory of the stigma attached to it by his father. That, if it could be carried out, would be something, indeed, to live for, and Gerald determined on learning how far Mrs. Entwistle could help him in his research on the first available opportunity.

On the morning of the day after that on which he dined with Doctor Asprey, Gerald went for his usual ride, and asking on his return after Mrs. Entwistle, was surprised to learn that she had risen, and had been wheeled into the boudoir, according to her usual custom.

"She had been perfectly quiet through the night," Willis observed, and declared "that she felt no worse than usual from the sharp attack on the previous evening." In her boudoir, at the window overlooking the park, Gerald found her. Her back was towards the door, but she recognised his footstep at once, and there was a smile on her face as he stooped down to kiss her forehead.

"You are none the worse for last night's attack, Willis tells me," said Gerald, tenderly.

"By some extraordinary and inexplicable accident, Willis is right," said Mrs. Entwistle; "either my system is becoming so accustomed to attacks that I am beginning to thrive upon them, as some persons are said to do upon poisons, or what would have been the ill effects of the shock last night were counteracted by the excessive amount of amusement which I experienced."

"Amusement?"

"Amusement, and created by you, or rather by the conversation which we had. I cannot imagine anything more utterly ridiculous, except upon the stage, than our talk last evening and its climax, though I am afraid I spoiled the effect of that by my unfortunate want of strength! I ought to have risen from the sofa, and flinging my arms open for you to rush into, exclaimed, 'Behold your long lost aunt!' But there is something in the very name and character of 'aunt,' which would render any attempt at romance impossible in the most determined heroine, to say nothing of such a very matter-of-fact person as myself."

"I am glad you were amused," said Gerald, quietly. "You had the advantage, you see, of being acquainted with all the hidden mystery, and of enjoying my surprise at its announcement. For my own part my feelings were not entirely of an amused character."

"You surely did not find anything to be sentimental over in the discovery of your aunt?" said Mrs. Entwistle, looking at him maliciously.

"No," replied Gerald, "but my aunt, if you recollect, spoke of my mother."

"Ah, you were fond of your mother, I believe?"

"Fond of her," echoed Gerald; "she was your sister, you say? Were you not fond of her?"

"No," said Mrs. Entwistle, quietly. "At one time, yes; but for many years before her death, certainly not. Fondness for people is a mistake which one grows out of in years; the last person I was fond of was myself, but that delusion died away long since."

"And yet you are fond of me?" said Gerald.

"A weakness of old age, my dear," said Mrs. Entwistle, "and one which, having so few, I can afford to encourage."

Gerald noticed and appreciated the tones in which these words were uttered.

"It seems to me so strange that any one could have disliked my mother," said he, half unconsciously.

"I didn't positively dislike her," said Mrs. Entwistle. "My feelings towards her were of a negative character. I didn't like her, and I had my reasons!"

"From what you said last night, you must also have had your reasons for disliking my father!"

"I had my reasons for hating your father!" said Mrs. Entwistle, with sudden energy, "and I have them still. There

was never much of the angel in my composition, but what little there was, he obliterated. What I might have been had I not met Geoffry Heriot, I know not; but that I am as I am, cynical, hard, unforgiving, and unbelieving, is his work!"

"You still continue to make me half-confidences," said Gerald; "to speak to me of results without explaining the causes. Why not tell me about my father and yourself in early life, and the story of what he did to make you hate him so cordially?"

"You are afflicted with an insatiable curiosity, my dear Gerald, and, after my announcement to you of last evening, seem to look upon me as a kind of mystery-monger, with constantly startling surprises in store. As you are pleased to ask for a story, I do not know that mine would satisfy you: it would be merely the narration of a sufficiently ordinary set of incidents, with perhaps a somewhat uncommon dénouement (that I think is the correct word), and I must again apologise for my weakness, which prevents my pulling my chair and sitting down close by you in the true dramatic manner."

"If the story, or whatever you choose to call it, concerns my mother, it is sure to have interest for me," said Gerald, earnestly, purposely ignoring the latter portion of Mrs. Entwistle's speech.

"It concerns your father more than your mother," said Mrs. Entwistle; "but I think you will find that, like most persons who get an opportunity of narration, I make myself the principal heroine of the adventures. Why I permitted any further reference to the subject at all," she added, after a pause, "I cannot understand, except it is that you seem interested, and it may be as well to let the real facts of the case be known while I am capable of stating them; but please let it be perfectly understood, that this is nothing in the light of a death-bed confession, or, indeed, of a repentance of any kind. What I did was done with my eyes open, and I am not sure that it would not be repeated exactly in the same way, under similar circumstances."

Gerald marked her rising colour and flashing eyes.

"Will not the excitement of talking be too much for you?" he said, bending over her, and taking her hand.

"No," she replied, with a half-laugh; "you have brought it upon yourself, and must now go through with it. Only I should like my hand to remain in yours while you listen to me."

"You were too young during your mother's lifetime to have understood anything about this, even if she had chosen to tell you; so I will begin at the beginning. She and I were the only children of a man high up in one of the government offices. Our mother died when we were quite little tots (there was but a year's difference between my sister and myself), and my only recollection of her is in connexion with a big oil-painting, where she was represented looking on in simpering delight at her children gambolling with a big black retriever dog, while her husband loaded a gun in the background. All this, with the exception of the black dog, was the result of pure imagination on the part of the artist. Our mother never had health enough to look after us in our play-time, and our father certainly never loaded or fired a gun in his life. He was a small, studious man of a scientific turn, who cordially hated his official work, save for the money which it brought to him, and who passed all his leisure in making chemical experiments.

"Nor do I remember that there was ever the amount of affection between your mother and myself, indicated by the entwined arms and loving glances in the family portrait. At the time of the execution of that wonderful work of art, we were both plain children, though of a different plainness. Your mother's hair was light, her features heavy, her figure squab and clumsy, whereas my hair was black, my complexion sallow, and my limbs thin and ungainly. We had but little in common even then; she was sluggish and apathetic, I impulsive and intolerant. As we grew up together, our characters remained pretty much as they had been, but as regards outward appearance, not merely did each improve wonderfully, but there was found to be a great amount of similarity between us. We were exactly of the same height; my figure had filled out until it closely resembled your mother's; our walk, our mode of carrying ourselves, our accustomed gestures, were exactly the same; we usually dressed alike, and the general resemblance, even to the voices, was so great, that to tell which was Miss Emma and which Miss Florence, was pronounced impossible, unless our faces were plainly visible.

"When we were respectively seventeen and eighteen years old our father died, leaving just enough to keep us and no more, and recommending us to the tender

mercy of his sister, a maiden lady, who lived at Stonechester. She was a pleasant, kindly old woman, and accepted the charge thus bequeathed to her in the most affectionate spirit, although the addition of two young women to her modest little household must have greatly deranged her comfort. Miss Hastings was highly thought of in the cathedral society to which her nieces were at first voted a charming addition. I am bound to say that your mother always retained the good opinion of these humdrum folk, which, for my part, I speedily lost; I used to quiz the canons, and curates, and all the rest of them, and flirted unmercifully with the military men who occasionally drifted into our midst from Chatham and Brompton barracks.

"One night, I recollect it as well as if it were yesterday, there was a little musical party at the Deanery. At first I did not intend to go, thinking it would be dull and prosy; but I was over-persuaded, and I went. We were a little late, and on our arrival found that the singing had already commenced. A man's voice, strange to me then, but from that hour never forgotten, was sighing forth the last notes of Edgar Ravenswood's farewell to his lost love. We stood spell-bound. I have heard this air sung by all the great tenors of my time, better and more accurately sung, doubtless, but never with the same effect. The voice we listened to then was low and clear, but its speciality was the wonderfully sympathetic quality of its tones; the heart-broken despair trembling in every note of the lover's wail. When the air was concluded there was a burst of applause, unusually loud for that decorous assemblage; and as we entered the room I saw the hostess warmly congratulating a gentleman, whom I rightly imagined to be the singer.

"There was nothing particularly remarkable in his appearance, save that he wore a moustache, or, as it was then called, "a pair of moustachios," an ornament rarely cultivated by Englishmen. He was of average height, with dark eyes and flowing dark hair; a trim figure and dainty hands and feet. His age must have been about eight-and-thirty, for though considerably younger than the dean, of whom he was some distant connexion, he had been for a short time contemporary with him both at Harrow and Cambridge. Since his university days Mr. Yeldham, that was his name, had principally resided abroad, having an independence of his own, and being devoted

to music and painting, both of which arts he practised as an amateur. After a little time he was asked to sing again, and I was introduced to him to act as his accompanist. This time choosing a simple English ballad—one of Dibdin's I remember—he created even a greater amount of enthusiasm, and when he bent down to thank me for my assistance, I felt that a new era in my life had begun.

"How absurd it must seem to you to hear me, an old woman, talking in this strain! I myself see the absurdity of it, and yet I can perfectly recollect the glamour which possessed me, the beatific state in which I lived when in that man's company! You must try and picture me to yourself as I was, not as I am, if you would realise all I have to say. He seemed pleased with me, and sat by me for some time. When we left the piano, he inquired who 'the pretty fair girl was,' at the same time indicating my sister, and I introduced him to her, and they chatted; she being sufficiently roused by him to put some animation into her countenance during their conversation. Meanwhile, I sat by, fascinated, enraptured, drinking in every word that he said. He asked permission to call, and came the next day; and when he took his leave, my aunt, who usually had a holy horror of strangers, declared him to be the most delightful man she had ever seen. He came again and again, practised music with us, gave us drawing lessons, showed us sketches of his own, and seemed never so happy, never so much at his ease, as when with us. I say with 'us' advisedly, for he scarcely spoke more to one than to the other, though I saw, or fancied I saw, that if he had a preference, it was for my sister.

"The mere notion of that made me mad, for I loved him already; and she had not heart enough, or energy enough, to love anything but her fine clothes and her bed. She seemed surprised when I asked her if she had no special liking for him, and answered 'No' with exemplary frankness.

"After a fortnight of this kind of life, Mr. Yeldham went away, to stay with some friends to whom he had promised himself, before coming to Stonechester. He said 'Good-bye' to us, and declared that he would soon return; but the pleasure which I felt at this intimation was checked by observing the deep earnest glance with which he regarded my sister as he spoke; depth and earnestness to which she certainly did not respond, even if, as I very much doubt, she perceived them.

"Edward Yeldham went, and took my heart away with him. Two well-known dashing regiments had come into barracks at Chatham, and that was the liveliest winter that Stonechester had known for years; but I seemed to have lost all my old zest for flirtation, and was actually pining after a man who had never spoken words of more than ordinary friendship to me! I sat out dances, and gave idiotic answers when addressed, and was so dull and distraite that people began to say that Emma and Florence Hastings had changed characters. There was some truth in this, for my sister, who had listened unmoved to the dulcet tones of Edward Yeldham, and been not merely untouched by them, but unconscious of the fervent looks of admiration in his great dreamy eyes, was in love at last! In love with a thin little man, with the figure of a ramrod, and the voice of a drill-sergeant!

"This was Major Heriot, who came over to one of our county balls from Brompton barracks, where he was staying with some Indian military friends, and who, in his dry, bamboo kind of manner, seemed taken with Emma. 'He was a mighty warrior,' they told her, and had killed many black men; and on the strength of this, she fell down and worshipped him at once. He had money, which made the courtship very smooth; he was not a man to do anything hurriedly, but in due course of time he proposed, and was accepted. Between his proposal and their marriage, Mr. Yeldham came back to Stonechester. He came to Stonechester, and to our house, at a time when I was the only one at home. I saw him: had I had any doubt of his love for Emma—and I had none—I should have known it by the expression of his face, by the tone of his voice, when he asked me if the news he had heard was true, and if he had to congratulate me upon my sister's engagement. When I told him 'Yes,' he muttered some vague politeness, and speedily changed the subject. 'He had only looked in at Stonechester,' he said, 'on his way to Dover; he was going abroad again for some little time. He should not be back until long after my sister's marriage. Would I remember him very kindly to her,' and—he was gone.

"With such proofs of Mr. Yeldham's love for my sister, my pride should, of course, have taught me to give up the worship with which I had regarded him, and to cast out his image from the place which it occupied in my thoughts. Did

I do this? Not the least in the world. I had seen him. I had listened to him once again, and I was more madly in love with him than ever; besides, I had little fear of rivalry. I was innocent in those days, and I thought that by my sister's marriage, she, my only obstacle, would be removed from my path, and that Edward Yeldham, with his eyes open to my devotion to him, would ask me to become his wife.

"Emma was married. On her wedding-day came, as a present, a set of handsome coral ornaments, with Mr. Yeldham's card, bearing some address in Palermo pencilled on it, inside the case. That was all that was heard of him until some three months after, when, one spring afternoon, he called at the house which the Heriots were then occupying in London. I was staying with them at the time, and carefully marked his manner; I had opportunities of doing so, for he was asked to dinner, and became a frequent visitor at the house. On a subsequent occasion of his being in Mrs. Heriot's company, I saw the fatal mistake which I had made in imagining that her marriage would cure him of his infatuation. Nothing could be more respectful than his manner to her. I firmly believe from the hour of his first introduction to her at the Deanery, to the day of his death, he never addressed to her one word of what the world calls gallantry; but neither his eyes nor the tones of his voice were under his control, and I knew that his worship of Emma was as devoted as ever.

"Major Heriot saw it also; he chafed under this man's constant presence and evident admiration of Mrs. Heriot. He spoke to Emma about it, and she, who thought that the sun shone out of her husband's small grey eyes (you have better eyes than your father, Gerald), came to me full of incredulous laughter, declaring that the whole thing was a mistake, and that Mr. Yeldham's visits were entirely on my account, as she had told the major! I did not contradict her; all I cared for was to see him, to be thrown into his society, to soothe myself in the light of his eyes and with the music of his voice. After all, I was in one sense safe from my rival now. I knew Edward Yeldham's sense of honour, knew that whatever he might feel, the fact of her marriage was sufficient to prevent him ever making love to her, and felt sure that I should one day gain him for myself.

"Very shortly after that affair came a

crisis, unexpected, and far different from anything I had believed or hoped. One evening after a small dinner-party at my sister's, Mr. Yeldham and I were seated in the conservatory; he was talking hypothetically and of a third person, as it afterwards transpired, in a way which led me, maddened as I was by my love for him, to believe that he was pleading his own cause; and on his pausing for a moment, I said something equivalent to an acceptance of his suit. That was the most painful moment of my life, but it was more painful almost for him than for me. I shall never forget how gently and yet how completely he showed me my error, leaving me no straw of hope to cling to. 'I was young,' he said, 'and had my life before me; he was doomed to celibacy and solitude, but while there could never be anything between us stronger than friendship, there was no reason why that friendship should not be most deep and most lasting!' I agreed to this. I gave him my hand upon the bargain, and, as I gave it him, I wished that it had been dagger-armed that I might have slain him where I stood, for I hated him from the bottom of my heart!

"I avoided Mr. Yeldham when he called at the house after that episode, and I suppose four or five months elapsed before I saw him again. He reappeared in September at Baden, where I was staying with the Heriots, and my quick eyes soon showed me that his devotion to Emma had undergone no change. To me his manner was more attentive, more cordial, than it had ever been before. He seemed to feel that we understood each other, and that no misconception could be placed upon our relations. My cordiality was seemingly as great as his, but in my heart I hated him, and my one longing was for revenge upon him. This revenge I soon found means to gratify!

"Two days after Mr. Yeldham's appearance, Emma told me that Major Heriot's jealousy was again aroused, and I took care that it should have enough to feed on— Shall I go on? You loved your mother, Gerald, and you will hate me when you hear the rest."

"Go on if you please; it is for my mother's sake that I ask you to proceed."

"As you will," said Mrs. Entwistle, with a slight shrug of her shoulders. "As I said before, I have no feeling of repentance for my actions then. Major Heriot was jealous, and I fed the flame of his jealousy by anonymous letters, and by every possible device which I could carry

out unsuspected. My sister would suffer, it is true, but I had little sisterly feeling for her. I do not think I ever thought of her in the matter; all I thought of was revenge upon the man who had slighted me in my love. Mixed up with this was a feeling that if I could make myself useful to him, make him thoroughly depend on me, I might win him again! You cannot understand the coexistence of two such feelings, but you are not a woman!

"At last I thought I saw my way to carrying out this idea. A grand ball was to be given at a French banker's, to which no one was to be admitted except in mask and domino, the supper hour being named for the period of identification, when disguise was to be laid aside. Invitations were sent to the Heriots and myself, and accepted by all; but, acting on the advice of an anonymous letter, written by me in the same hand and style as those previously sent to him, Major Heriot pleaded illness just before the time of starting, and begged us to go alone. The anonymous letter told him that he would that night have an opportunity of observing Mr. Yeldham's conduct towards his wife. Mr. Yeldham's dress he knew, as he had had a hand in its selection; Mrs. Heriot and Miss Hastings would be dressed in similar dominoes, black with rose edgings. And as the ladies were exactly alike in height and figure, he must, if he would keep an eye of observation on his wife, be careful to remember the sole distinguishing mark; which was, that she would wear a small lavender coloured bow sewn on the hood of her domino, whereas her sister's would be perfectly plain.

"When the carriage, containing only my sister and myself, drove up to the door of the hotel where the ball was given, she alighted first; and as she was getting out, I securely pinned to the hood of my own domino the lavender bow which I had provided for the purpose. We were both masked, as was every one else, but we were soon joined by Mr. Yeldham, whose dress we recognised at once, and by other friends. I managed to draw Mr. Yeldham apart from the others, and quickly perceived that our movements were watched by a small active figure in a black domino. I danced two consecutive dances with my companion, and afterwards, under the pretext of suffering from heat, asked him to take me into the conservatory, where we seated ourselves in a position where our every movement could be seen by the frequent loungers in the passage at the end, whither, however, the sound of our voices could not reach. No

sooner were we seated, than I marked the slight figure in the black domino intently regarding us. I talked with great animation, though, purposely, in a low tone, and seemed to inspire my companion. I reminded him of some story of private theatricals, with which he had amused me when in London, and asked him to repeat it. He acted the scene which he described, and in so doing, he took my hand and bent over me as though addressing me in the most fervent manner. At that moment, with one upward glance, I saw the man in the domino turn away and disappear; then I knew that my revenge on the man that had slighted me was about to be accomplished."

"Good God!" cried Gerald, "I see it all now!"

"Stay and hear me out. I was about to meet some friends in Switzerland, and had arranged to start at a very early hour that morning. On our arrival at home, Mrs. Heriot was surprised to find that her husband had just gone out. He did not return until he had shot Edward Yeldham, in the full belief that he was Mrs. Heriot's lover."

"But could not my mother prove——"

"What? and to whom could she appeal? To me, you will say, to prove that I, and not she, was the person addressed in the conservatory? I was far away by that time, and the letter which she wrote failed to reach me."

"But the domino—Sir Geoffry—my father—knew that the woman who was in the conservatory wore a lavender bow in her domino hood?"

"That lavender bow was in the hood of Mrs. Heriot's domino when she produced it to convince her husband of his error! I myself pinned it there as she rested on my shoulder on our way back from the ball."

Mrs. Entwistle paused, and looked up at Gerald, expecting an outburst of wrath.

But the tears were in his eyes as he muttered in a broken voice:

"My poor darling! my poor darling! how she must have suffered! Thank God, her innocence can now be proved!"

AN OLD HAMPSHIRE FAMILY.

If their claims of long descent be well founded, the Tichbornes of Tichborne lorded it in Hampshire long before the advent of William the Norman, and were masters of the manor bearing their name when Alfred ruled the land. Trussel says the name is a contraction of De Itchen-

bourne, another writer that it is a corrupt form of Ticeburn. Be this as it may, a Sir Roger de Tichborne built the northern aisle of the village church in the reign of Henry the First. In that of the second king of the name, there lived another Sir Roger, a daring, valiant knight, but an illiberal one withal. When his wife, Mabell, lay upon her death-bed, she was seized with a desire to keep her memory green by bequeathing a dole of bread for yearly distribution to the poor upon the feast of the Annunciation. The master of Tichborne did not care to cross his dying wife, but in the same churlish spirit as actuated Godiva's lord, took all grace from his consent by the condition he imposed. In order to limit his liability, Sir Roger stipulated his lady's bequest should be confined to the annual proceeds of so much of his land as she could travel round unaided, while a certain billet of wood was burning. The infirm dame was carried to a corner of a field and laid upon the ground until the brand was fairly kindled; then she rose and started upon her race against time, crawling at such a pace, and displaying such staying qualities, that her dismayed husband wondered when she would cry, "Hold!—enough!" Stop she did at last, but not before she had won some goodly acres for her death-bed fancy, and performed a feat of pedestrianism so extraordinary, that the scene of it has ever since been known as "The Crawls." This achieved, Lady Mabell was carried back to her chamber, and all the family summoned to hear her last words of prophetic warning. So long as the terms of her hardly-won bequest were strictly carried out would the Tichbornes prosper, but should any of the race attempt to discontinue or divert Lady Mabell's benefaction, his covetousness would entail the extinction of his house; an event to be foreshadowed by a generation of seven sons being succeeded by a generation of seven daughters and no son. So the Lady Day distribution of twenty-six ounce loaves to all comers was founded, and the Tichborne Dole became a Hampshire institution.

County honours were not unknown to the earlier Tichbornes. In three several years in the reign of Edward the Second, Sir John Tichborne served as sheriff of the county of Southampton: besides being a member of parliament, a justice-itinerant, and castellan of the king's castle of Old Sarum. In 1487, the shrievalty was again filled by a John Tichborne. In 1522, Nicholas Tichborne acted as one of the commissioners for collecting the subsidy in aid of

the Duke of Suffolk's army in France, and thirty years afterwards we find a Nicholas Tichborne in the office of sheriff. When England became a Protestant country, the Tichbornes held fast to the old faith, and some of them got into trouble thereby. In 1583, a Mr. Tichborne was subjected to an examination, touching his having departed beyond seas and returned home with certain Popish relics. In 1585, a Nicholas Tichborne, of Hampshire, excused himself for not doing his part in raising light horse for her majesty's service—a penalty attached to nonconformity—on the ground of lack of means, he being a younger brother, and the son of a younger brother, and already in custody for recusancy. The following year saw a member of the old family in custody for a much more grievous offence; nothing less than the conspiring with other "wicked and devilish youths" to murder Elizabeth, bring in foreign invasion, deliver the "Queen of Scots, sack the City of London, rob and destroy all the wealthy subjects of the realm, set fire to all the queen's ships, cloy all the great ordnance, to kill the Lord Treasurer, Secretary Walsingham, Sir Ralph Sadler, and Sir Amias Paulett, and to subvert religion and the whole state of government.

Young, handsome, gifted, eager to enjoy life, and rich enough to do so, it was an unlucky hour for Chidiok Tichborne when Jesuit Ballard persuaded his friend Babington to turn conspirator. "Before this thing chanced," said the victim of ill-placed friendship, "we lived together in the most flourishing estate; of whom went report in the Strand, in Fleet-street, and elsewhere about London, but of Babington and Tichborne? No threshold was of force to brave our entry. Thus we lived and wanted nothing we could wish for, and God knows what less in my head than matters of state affairs!" Babington confided his mad plans to Tichborne, and he, while refusing to be a dealer in the affair, kept his friend's counsel, and "so consented." While Babington and his fellows, wise in their own conceit, fancied the crown of England lay at their disposing, wily Walsingham had thrown his net around them, ready to haul them to death when the fitting moment came. Arraigned for high treason, Chidiok Tichborne at first pleaded not guilty, but afterwards admitted his complicity in the plots, and was condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered; a sentence executed in all its horrid details in Lincoln's-inn-fields. Before paying the penalty of his

crime, the unhappy conspirator addressed his "dear countrymen," warning them not to be led away by a too generous friendship as he had been, and asking their pity. "My sorrows may be your joy; yet mix your smiles with tears, and pity my case. I am descended from a house from two hundred years before the Conquest, never stained till this my misfortune. I have a wife, and one child—my wife, Agnes, my dear wife, and there's my grief; and my sisters left in my hand; my poor servants, their master being taken, are dispersed, for all which I do most heartily grieve!" In his *Curiosities of Literature*, D'Israeli quotes a pathetic letter of leave-taking written by Tichborne to his young wife, and some verses composed by him in the Tower the night before he "perished with all the blossoms of life and genius about him, in the May-time of his existence." What this prison poem was like may be seen from the following stanzas:

My prime of youth is but a frost of cares,
My feast of joy is but a dish of pain,
My crop of corn is but a field of tares,
And all my goods is but vain hope of gain.
The day is fled, and yet I saw no sun,
And now I live, and now my life is done!

My spring is past, and yet it hath not sprung,
The fruit is dead, and yet the leaves are green,
My youth is past, and yet I am but young,
I saw the world, and yet I was not seen.
My thread is cut, and yet it is not spun,
And now I live, and now my life is done!

Among the prisoners in the Fleet in 1594 was one Benjamin Beard, who sought to ingratiate himself with the powers that were by betraying his co-religionists. Writing to Morgan Jones, of Gray's Inn, this precious rascal tells him that Jerome Heath, of Winchester, himself neither a recusant nor suspected for religion, was wont, in times of disturbance, to harbour such persons, and when the writer's grandmother, Mrs. Tichborne, lived, two priests, who were continually in her house, used, upon search being made, to hide at Heath's three or four days together. Beard offered to go to Winchester Castle, where his uncle, Gilbert Tichborne, and other friends remained for their convenience, and deliver them into the hands of the Lord Keeper, providing his lordship would so manage his release that his traitorous doings should not be suspected; but the shameful offer does not seem to have been accepted. In 1597, a Nicholas Tichborne was examined before Attorney-General Coke and Solicitor-General Fleming, and denied that Roger Tichborne, who kept him, ever heard any sermon in his own or

his mother's house, but he confessed his brother Thomas, a seminary priest, had said mass twice in one day in Roger's absence, for the pleasure of Mrs. Tichborne.

Although the Tichbornes, like other Catholic gentry, suffered in purse and person for their attachment to their religion, Camden goes too far in asserting that the family languished in obscurity in consequence of their Catholicism. Recusant as he was, Benjamin Tichborne, Esquire, was one of the batch of ten knights dubbed by Elizabeth at Basing in 1601. Sixteen hundred and three saw him sheriff of the county, very happily for his interests, since it afforded that opportunity which, duly seized, leads on to fortune. This opportunity was the death of the great queen. As soon as the news reached the Hampshire knight's ears, he stayed not for orders from London, but, hurrying to Winchester, at once proclaimed the accession of James the First. His ready zeal was not thrown away upon the new monarch. James gave Sir Benjamin the keepership of Winchester Castle, a post he coveted, in fee farm, with a pension of a hundred a year, for the lives of himself and his eldest son. The latter was shortly afterwards knighted at the Charterhouse, figuring among the guests at a grand entertainment given to the king there. The following year the plague drove the king from London, and he held his court of justice at Winchester, to which city officials, lawyers, peers, and courtiers soon flocked; for upon the 12th of November fifty of the county light horse, under Sir Richard Tichborne's command, rode over to Bagshot, and brought thence Sir Walter Raleigh and other gentlemen concerned in "Raleigh's Plot," who were handed over to the custody of Sir Benjamin Tichborne. The sheriff, of course, officiated at the ensuing trial, and played his part in the farce of the execution, when Cobham, Grey, and Markham were made to taste the bitterness of death before being respited. James was a frequent visitor at Tichborne. Laud records that upon the 29th of August, 1611, the king himself sat at Tichborne to hear his cause respecting the presidency of St. John's, and that day was a favourite one with James for honouring Sir Benjamin with his company; he was at Tichborne on that date in 1615, 1618, and 1623. Upon the last occasion he knighted the host's fourth son, Henry, having previously done the same office for his two other sons—the second, Walter, having been knighted

at Whitehall in 1604, and the third, Benjamin, at Tichborne, 1618, while in 1620 the head of the family had been elevated to the hundred and forty-eighth English baronetcy. Sir Benjamin enjoyed his new title nine years, dying in 1629. In the old church at Tichborne may still be seen the monument raised to his memory and to that of his wife, Amphillis, with whom he lived in inviolate affection for forty years.

Sir Benjamin's sons contrived to retain the royal favour their sire had won for the Tichbornes. His successor, Sir Richard, was sent by Charles the First on an embassy to the Queen of Bohemia, and appointed ranger of the forest of West Beare. Sir Walter married an heiress, but nevertheless was not able to keep out of monetary difficulties. In conjunction with the baronet he did a deal of business in the way of borrowing, but when the time came for paying, the brothers laughed at their creditors, being protected against all legal processes as sworn servants of the crown. In 1626, Mary Pulteney petitioned against the renewal of this protection, complaining that the Tichbornes would neither pay her nine hundred pounds they owed her, nor give reasonable security for an extension of time. They were ordered to satisfy the lady upon pain of losing their privileges, and apparently obeyed orders, for in 1637 a host of creditors prayed the king's council to stay protection until their long-standing claims were settled. One of them, John Button, sheriff of Hants, setting forth how "out of his affection for Sir Richard and Sir Walter Tichborne, he not only furnished their occasions with ready money, but stood engaged for them for other moneys amounting to five hundred pounds," which had been due five years, but they stood upon their protection, notwithstanding they had sufficient to make good their debts, and yet live like themselves. Hard pressed upon all sides, the Tichbornes became petitioners in turn; assuring the king that in the space of two years they had paid or secured thirteen thousand pounds' worth of their own and other men's debts, but in the face of the clamours of so many importunate creditors, they would not ask for a renewal of their protection, but besought his majesty to summon their creditors before the council, that a reasonable composition might be agreed upon. This was done, but we can find no record of the result.

Impecuniosity was the badge of the Tichbornes at this time. Sir William Calley, writing to Richard Harvey, says: "The

sheriff of Hants has laid a kind of extent on the Tichborne's lands, which is likely to be worth nothing, and so I am in good possibility of being cheated out of my five pounds. Being John Tichborne is the king's servant, advise me how I might obtain leave to arrest him." This Tichborne tried to get a lease from the crown of all the quarries and mines "of chalk, limestone, and sand" about Milford Haven, but was baulked by the officials, to whom the matter was referred, reporting that the people there depended upon those things for their means of tillage, and that it was not fitting they should be forced to obtain licenses from any private person. Probably this was John Tichborne, D.D., whose wife, Priscilla, besought Laud's help, complaining that when she married the doctor, he promised not to meddle with the property left her by her first husband, but as soon as the knot was tied, in defiance of his promise, he mortgaged a house of hers for the benefit of one of his sons, and afterwards made a deed of gift of the whole of her estate to his other son, who, in virtue thereof, had seized upon everything, even to her wearing apparel. While the D.D. was robbing his wife and dreaming of enriching himself at the expense of the folks of Milford Haven, Sir Richard Tichborne hit upon a scheme to put money in his purse. He discovered that, by a law passed in Elizabeth's reign, it was enacted that no servant should leave his service without a testimonial that he was free to do so. No officer having been appointed to issue such documents, the act had never been put in force. Sir Richard asked for the appointment, with liberty to charge twopence for every testimonial he issued. King Charles, anxious to confer a mark of favour upon the baronet, commanded certain officials to see to the affair, and settle what rent Sir Richard should pay to the crown for such privilege. We fancy Sir Richard was disappointed of his twopence, matters of greater moment soon occupying the minds of the king and his advisers, for the great conflict was at hand. When it came, of the four brothers, Walter was dead and Henry busy in Ireland; Benjamin, disgusted with the idea of civil war, retired to the Continent; and Sir Richard cast in his fortunes with those of his patron, contented to hold a subordinate command under his brother-in-law, Lord Ogle, whose troops he admitted to garrison Winchester Castle for the king.

Sir Richard Tichborne died soon after the commencement of the war, and was

succeeded by his third son, Henry, who, like him, did duty under Ogle, fighting at the battle of Cheridown, and holding the castle obstinately against the attacks of the parliamentarians, under his own brother-in-law, Sir William Waller, until nothing was left to fight for, his loyalty being punished by the sequestration of his estates, until the whirligig of time brought its revenges. In 1666, we find Sir Henry Tichborne obtaining a passport to visit Flanders and the Spa waters for his health's sake. Returning to England in 1668, he was, much to his astonishment, arrested and committed to Winchester, shortly afterwards being transferred to the Tower, to remain a close prisoner there for a year and a half, without having the slightest notion of what he was accused. All he knew was that his house at Tichborne had been ransacked from top to bottom, and the wainscotings and ceilings pulled down, to find some evidence against him. He was one of Bedloe's victims, and was released, untried, at the end of three years. The only compensation Sir Henry received for his ill-deserved imprisonment was the lieutenancy of the New Forest, and the promise of being paid for certain land appropriated by the king for his new palace at Winchester; but neither he nor any of his kin ever touched the money.

While the Tichbornes were thus under a cloud at home, one of the race was skilfully and gallantly carving his own fortune in Ireland. This was Sir Henry, the youngest son of Sir Benjamin, who, after an apprenticeship to the art of war in the Low Countries, received from James the First the command of a regiment, and the governorship of Lifford Castle. When the rebellion broke out in Ireland in 1641, Sir Henry Tichborne was appointed governor of Drogheda, and with his own thousand men and Sir Thomas Lucas's horse set out for his post. Catholic as he was, the new governor waited two hours in the streets of Drogheda before he could obtain a lodging, and then had to take forcible possession. The only defences the town could boast were an old wall and an ordinary ditch, and in three weeks' time the place was invested by a rebel army fourteen thousand strong. For three months the siege went on, until the garrison was reduced to feed upon horses, dogs, and cats; but the governor never thought of giving in, and so galled the besiegers by vigorous sallies that they were glad to decamp before the Duke of Ormond's army

of relief appeared on the scene. When he received reinforcements, Sir Henry followed his foes up until he had driven them into Ulster. For this he was made privy councillor, and in 1642 one of the two lords justices of Ireland, in the place of Sir W. Parsons, "being a man of so excellent a fame," writes Clarendon, "that though the parliament was heartily angry at the removal of the other, and knew this would never be brought to serve their turn, yet they had nothing to object against him." While holding this office, Tichborne helped the distressed Protestants so heartily, that when parliament became supreme, it kept his regiment in the service, and retained Sir Henry in his Drogheda governorship. The execution of the king, however, was too much for the brave veteran; he threw up his appointment and retired into private life, "till such times as the confusions among those who had usurped the government had given opportunity to the well-wishers of the royal family to show themselves," and when that time came the old captain had a chief hand in forwarding the cause in Ireland. Charles the Second made him field-marshal of the forces in that country, an appointment he held until his death in 1667, at the age of eighty-six. His eldest son had died before him in battle; his second son was knighted by Charles the Second; this Sir William Tichborne lost two sons on the battle-field and one at sea; his successor was knighted by William the Third, created baronet in 1697, and upon the accession of George the First elevated to the peerage; but the heir to the family honours being cast away in the bay of Liverpool, the Irish barony of Ferrard became extinct upon the death of the first baron.

Tired of court and camp the Tichbornes henceforward remained satisfied with maintaining their position among the squirearchy of Hampshire. In 1786, the old house was represented by Sir Henry Tichborne, who, in consequence of the complaints of the magistracy of the rioting attending the gathering together of rogues and vagabonds from all quarters upon the coming round of Lady Day, resolved to dare the ancient prophecy and abolish the Tichborne Dole. Singularly enough, he was blessed with a family of seven sons and one daughter; more singular still, his successor had seven daughters and never a son, and at his death the property passed to his brother Edward, who had changed his name to that of Doughty, and was known as Sir Edward Tichborne-Doughty, so that Lady Mabell's

prediction was, after a fashion, fulfilled; but in 1853 the two names changed places by royal license, and the Tichbornes were Tichbornes once again. The doom threatened seven centuries ago seemed near a more precise fulfilment when the once prolific family was represented in the Baronetage by a posthumous infant and his uncle, "Roger Charles, supposed to have been lost at sea in 1854."

SQUARE AT LAST.

THE Englishman at large is nothing, if not a sportsman, and the New World affords him singular advantages for the indulgence of his pet proclivities. He who in the lightness of his heart says to himself, "Let me get up and kill something," is in America seldom at a loss for something to kill, and can please himself as to the size of his game, from the dainty quail to tough old Ebenezer, the renowned "grizzly" himself.

A few years ago I was much embarrassed by the difficulty of choice. Florida held out many attractions, but, on the other hand, I was strongly tempted to try the hunting-grounds about two hundred miles west of Omaha, where, an energetic Western friend wrote me, all kinds of game were to be had in plenty, especially, he informed me, in a fine burst of enthusiasm, "big game," deer, buffaloes, bears, and—and—Indians. With many a sigh I turned from this alluring prospect, as involving the sacrifice of too much time, and betook myself to the St. John river, Florida, and, engaging the services of one Lafayette K. Wallop, better known in that part of the country as Chunky Lafe, in allusion to his thick-set muscular conformation, as huntsman, boatman, and general factotum, I set out in his canoe, in quest of deer, Lafe paddling away at a great pace. Chunky Lafe was a silent man, sparing in his speech, but prodigal of his thews and sinews. His powerful strokes sent the light craft flying rapidly past the marshy banks, wooded to the water's edge, till, just as I was beginning to enjoy the enforced repose of the passive tenant of a canoe, a sudden shout from the hunter startled me out of my semi-somnolent condition.

"Say, boss," said the Chunky one, "guess you'd best lay down in the canoe."

"Why on earth should I lie down? I do not see any reason for hiding."

"Wal, fact is Hefty Bill Slocum is coming up stream."

"And what have I to do with Mr. Slocum?" I snapped out rather impatiently.

"Wal yer see, Bill and me is on shooting terms, and every time we meet we air kinder bound to have a crack at each other; so as I guess you, c'yurnel, ain't in this deal, you ought not to put up any stakes; this here muss ain't none of your funeral, but it might soon be if you kep' settin' up thar."

Here was a delightful situation! Two Southern desperadoes burning to engage in an aquatic duel, all remonstrance or interference absolutely useless, and worse than useless; the agreeable prospect of the canoe being upset in a broad rapid river thickly tenanted by alligators being coupled with the probability of being accidentally picked off by the rifle of Mr. Slocum.

However, as the exposure of my upper works to Hefty Bill's fire could serve no useful purpose, I followed the advice of Lafe and lay down tolerably well under cover, breathing many a prayer for the success of our side. Peering over the edge I saw that our opponent was waiting, rifle in hand, for us to come within range, a feat we were accomplishing with detestable rapidity, while my gondolier's rifle was at hand ready cocked, so that he could drop the paddle and seize his weapon at the slightest movement of his adversary. Nearer and nearer we came, not a sound breaking the deathlike silence but the light plash of the paddle, as Lafe, by a few last vigorous strokes, shot within range of the enemy. Dropping his paddle with lightning speed the hunter seized his rifle. The report of the two weapons rang out together as accurately as if the combatants had fired by signal. The plash and ricochet of Slocum's bullet told me my man was unhurt, when Chunky Lafe, lifting his fox-skin cap, said slowly and solemnly:

"Square at last, Bill Slocum! Poor Sal!"

A canoe floating lazily down the river was all that remained to tell that Hefty Bill Slocum had ever existed.

The mention of a woman's name by my usually taciturn guide naturally awakened my curiosity, but the moment did not seem favourable for investigating the mystery, so I discreetly held my tongue, but I suppose looked inquiringly enough, as, after paddling swiftly and silently for nearly an hour, Lafe deigned to open his lips.

"Beg pardon, c'yurnel, for bustin' up your day's sport with my private biz', but guess you'll excuse me when I tell you the

story. Thar's a good friend of mine lives around the creek here, and if you don't mind we'll lay over at his shanty, and after supper I'll tell you the rights of the muss 'twixt me and Bill."

I consented gladly enough, feeling that after the scene just enacted all hunting would be utterly tame and spiritless. Paddling a short distance up a narrow tributary stream (always called a creek in these countries) we came upon a large and cheerful-looking homestead. Lafe's friend received us with true American hospitality; his house, his meat, his drink, his horses, and his dogs were all at our service in a moment. After a stiff horn of Monongahela to whet (very unnecessarily) our appetites, we fell pell-mell on a savoury meal of oysters, fish, and bear-meat, not forgetting hog and hominy. At the conclusion of a repast worthy of full-grown bo-constrictors, our host produced a demi-john of old Santa Cruz, and pipes being lighted Chunky Lafe pulled himself together, and expectorating freely, began.

"Yer see, c'yurnel and friend Wash" (Lafe's friend rejoiced in the name of Washington K. Pegrim), "this was a kinder old score as I rubbed off to-day. In the good old times afore the war, Bill Slocum and me was fast friends; like brothers I was agoin' to say, but I've ginerally found brothers love each other in a slack-baked sorter way; anyhow me and Bill was allus around together, and barrin' a kinder likin' for huntin', fishin', playin' poker, drinkin', and fightin', was two as likely young boys as any in Augustine. I can't say as we was particlerly heavy on work—no Southern gentleman was in them days—but with a bit of land for cotton, a tidy corn-patch, a drove of hogs, and a few niggers, we managed to scratch along pretty well. All my relations had passed in their checks long ago, except sister Sal, and I guess a prettier, smarter, and more stylish gal wasn't to be found in the State of Floridy."

Here Lafe seemed to suffer from a slight huskiness, but imbibing a huge draught of Santa Cruz, went on, visibly refreshed:

"Wal, poor Sal was run after pretty much by the boys, but I kept a sharp eye on 'em, I did, for though not very rich, we was high-toned, no high-toneder family lived in them parts, and my sister was all in all to me, more nor anybody will ever be agin. Then come the war, and you gentlemen know what that misunderstandin' brought about. We Southerners rose like one man, and me and Bill weren't behind."

hand, you bet. Many a hard day's march and hard day's fightin' we had together, with nary shoe to our feet, and nothin' but a pocketful of parched corn to live on for days and days together. At last came the bad day of Gettysburg, and me and Bill was in the thick of it. Four times we charged up to the muzzles of their everlastin' guns, and four times we got druv back. Yer see we had to cross a kinder open space right under their fire, and were so eternally whipped before we reached the tarnation skunks, that our regiments shrivelled up to mere skeletons afore we got within arm's length. Wal, we come on agin and agin yellin' like devils, but it warn't no good; they druv us back, and at last I missed Bill.

"Wal, I ain't the man to brag o' that, but I went out into the hottest fire I ever seen, and brought in Bill hit pretty hard. We had a bad time that day, but I brought off Bill, and somehow he pulled through, and was sent home down South to recuperate. To make a long story short I went through the whole war, and when our side bust up, went down home with a sore heart, a ragged suit, and a derned empty pocket.

"Through all the cussed affair I had looked forward to seein' sister Sal and Hefty Bill, with the kinder feelin' I dessay you can understand, but when I got one evening to Augustine, I found the old shanty shet up, and wonderin' what was the matter, made tracks for the corner grocery. There I found the folks glad enough to see me, but seemin' to look queer, and act silent and dummy, as if they was to a funeral. So I says right out, 'What in thunder's the matter with you all, and what's come o' Sal?' Wal, yer see, the whole thing come out at last. Bill Slocum had come home invalided and dead broke, and Sal, of course, took him in, and nussed him as if he'd been her brother, and, after the manner of wimmen folks, fell in love with her patient. Sal, I guess, warn't the first fool of her sex, and won't be the last by a long shot.

"Now comes the worst part of the story. One mornin' they was both missed, and there was no doubt that that scoundrel Bill had run off with her to one of the cities North, without leaving letter or line to track 'em by. My mind was soon made up. I sold the old place and what little stuff was in it for what I could get, and made tracks for the North to find Sal, and mayhap get square with Bill.

"I went through the North, city by city,

in my weary search, and at last found my poor little sister, but, gentlemen, I would rather have found her headstone in the cemetery than have found her as I found her. I took good care of the poor girl, but it was no use; she pined away, and I buried her in Chicago, and then looked around for the trail of Hefty Bill.

"Nary soul could tell a word about him, and poor Sal, God bless her, never would. She was true to him, bad as he had used her. Wal, I could not find Bill anywheres, and as I had to do somethin' to live, came down here huntin' around a little and drinkin' a great deal, when one day, at Tim Mulligan's bar, who should I see but Hefty Bill Slocum himself. Gentlemen, I have been all through a big war, and in many a dashing charge, but I never felt as I did at that moment. My head swam round like a young gal's in her fust waltz, a fog came over my eyes, my hand was on my Derringer when I saw a flash acrost my eyes, felt a warm splash, heard a shot, and all was dark. They told me afterwards that Bill fired a little too quick for me, and that the shot brought on quite a pretty free fight. There was a roughish lot around Mulligan's, and they weren't the boys to let a muss go past without taking a hand. So Bill scored the first trick in our small game, but I'd got to get square with him, and I tried more nor once, but his everlastin' luck helped him till to-day. But to-day," and here Lufe dropped his head on his chest and stared into the fire, "I guess we've got square at last!"

SUMMER IN FRANCE, 1871.

THE summer has come back again, I feel
The sunshine cover me from brow to feet;
The bee goes searching for his honeyed meal,
The rose is crimson-dyed and smells full sweet.

The lily looks as stately and serene
As in the day ere I began to grieve;
The stream is musical, the forest green;
The faithless nightingales sing loud at eve.

Why now should flow'rets deck the blood-stained
ground?

O blooming rose! O cruel flaunting thing,
That wear'st the colour of my love's death wound!
O birds that know him dead and yet will sing!

The plum is hanging on the southern wall,
It waxeth ripe beneath the sun's warm ray;
Last year we did not wait for it to fall,
But plucked its sweetness as we went our way.

Now let it roll and wither into mould,
Like that dear hand that dropped away from mine;
Since so much life is silenced and grown cold,
'Tis good to rot while star and sunbeam shine.

For o'er our sun there came a cloud of gloom,
When shout of war came blown across the sea:
To thee my love it was the trump of doom:
It was the trump of doom to thee and me.

Now all return that shared our joy before,
Of flower and sunshine, bough and singing bird;
Only thy footstep cometh back no more,
Only thy voice shall not again be heard.

The summer has come back, but not for me.
I do not even know thy place of rest.
Or useless flowers might win some sanctity.
By shedding bloom above so brave a breast.

Somewhere the grass is springing o'er thy head,
And so I'll love the grass and hold it sweet,
And when content at last I too am dead,
I'll have no other covering for my feet.

Upon my heart shall lie no sculptured stone,
No idle wreath above my brow shall twine;
The tender grass shall wave o'er me alone:
Only the breeze shall know thy grave and mine.

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

GREY FRIARS (THE BLUECOAT SCHOOL).

OF the old Friary the cloisters and but-
tery alone remain. Five priests and four
laymen of the mendicant order of Grey
Minorite Friars came over from Italy, early
in the reign of Henry the Third, and at
first lodged with their religious kinsmen, the
Black Friars, in "Oldborne." John Travers,
a sheriff, then charitably gave them a house
in Cornhill, and after a time John Ewin, a
worthy mercer, let them build their cells on
a void spot of ground near St. Nicholas's
shambles (now Christ's Hospital).

Gifts from the pious and the penitent
were laid upon gifts, till the Friary became
a vast fortress of religion, and wealth slowly
sapped the pious poverty had fostered. But
Henry the Eighth knocked one black No-
vember Monday at the Friary gate, and,
sturdier mendicant than the monks them-
selves, swept all their shining church-plate
into his waggons. The annual valuation
of the Friary was put down at thirty-two
pounds, nineteen shillings, and tenpence.
The church then became a mere profane
warehouse for the spoils harried by our
archers and men-at-arms from Calais and
Boulogne, and these rude spoilers defaced,
as worthy Stow mentions with true anti-
quarian regret, all the splendid emblazoned
monuments of the royal and pious benefac-
tors. Nine railed-in stately tombs of alaba-
ster and marble were split and defaced, and
seven score marble gravestones were sold
for a paltry eighty pounds, by Sir Martin
Bowes, an irreverent and greedy goldsmith,
then alderman of London. It was at this
ruthless and irreligious time that brutal feet
trampled to dust or ruin the monuments of
four queens. First of these was Margaret, the
second wife of Edward the First; secondly,
that "she-wolf of France," Isabella, who
dethroned her weak husband, Edward the

Second, and ended her life miserably in
prison after twenty-eight years of purga-
torial agony; thirdly, Joan of the Tower,
Queen of Scots, the daughter of this wicked
woman; fourthly, Isabel Fitzwarin, Queen
of the little Isle of Man. Where the merry
blue boys now race and scamper also slept
Beatrice, Duchess of Bretagne, a daughter
of Henry the Third, and many brave and
stalwart noblemen, knights, and squires,
whose bones were dust and whose swords
were rust dreary ages ago.

The dissolution of the monasteries sent
thousands of lazy monks abroad to beg and
rob. The herds of peasants who had lived
on monastery doles began to cry aloud for
famine, and the poor grew up without
religion and without education. The want
became a crying one, and one of the few
good acts of Henry the Eighth's reign was
a gift, a fortnight before his miserable
death, of the Grey Friars, St. Bartholo-
mew, and Bethlehem Hospitals to the City
for charitable uses, together with lands
worth five hundred marks yearly. This
great gift was announced to the citizens
by excellent Bishop Ridley, in a sermon at
St. Paul's Cross. On the accession of the
young king, that "royal imp of grace,"
Bishop Ridley, in a sermon at Westminster,
urged him, before his court, to comfort
and relieve the poor. After the sermon the
king sent for Ridley, and in the great
gallery at Westminster gave him a pri-
vate interview, insisting on the bishop
remaining covered. The royal boy, with
much earnestness, for the appeal had
touched his good heart, requested Ridley to
tell him how he could best perform the duty
inculcated in the sermon. Ridley, surprised
at the immediate springing up of the good
seed, could hardly recover himself suffi-
ciently to urge the king to beg the lord
mayor and aldermen to consult on the sub-
ject. Edward, however, would not let
Ridley leave till the letter was signed and
sealed, and given to the worthy bishop to
deliver to Sir Richard Dobbs, the lord
mayor. The result of this letter was the
founding of Christ's Hospital at the Grey
Friars, for the education of poor and father-
less children, who were "to be trained up
in the knowledge of God, and some virtuous
exercises, to the overthrow of beggary."
For the idle and vicious poor, Bridewell
Palace was turned into a prison, and for the
sick poor the Hospitals of St. Thomas in
Southwark, and St. Bartholomew in West
Smithfield, were charitably founded. When
the charter was drawn up, the wise young

king wrote, with his own hand, in the blank space the scribes had left for the amount of annual endowment, "four thousand marks by the year," and then said, in the hearing of all the privy council, "Lord, I yield thee most hearty thanks that thou hast given me life thus long to finish this work, to the glory of thy name." Not long after, this boy of infinite promise died. King Edward also left to the four great charities six hundred pounds yearly, from the property of the decayed hospital of the Savoy. The citizens pressed forward the good work, and that same year admitted three hundred and sixty children. On Christmas Day, 1552, when the lord mayor and aldermen rode to St. Paul's in the afternoon, the ruddy children, in livery of russet cotton, stood in line from St. Lawrence-lane, towards St. Paul's; but the next Easter they were clothed in blue, and have ever since affected that goodly colour. The boys' dress is a corruption of the old monastic garb. The loose-skirted dark blue coat is the monk's tunic; the under-coat, or yellow, is the sleeveless under-frock of the friar; the narrow belt is the monkish cord changed to leather; and the neck-bands are the clerical adornments of the Carolan times. The yellow breeches smack of the Georgian epoch, and the little muffin cap, now justly abandoned, is also of great antiquity.

The Hospital school soon found benefactors. Sir William Chester, and John Calthorpe, a rich draper, built the walls adjoining St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and vaulted over the City ditch from Aldersgate to Newgate, which before had been a great source of annoyance and illness to the boys. The playground, still called by Blues the "Ditch," marks the line of the old City moat. Another worthy donor was Richard Castle, an industrious shoemaker, generally known as the "Cock of Westminster," from his untiring hammer calling up all the neighbours, summer and winter, before four o'clock in the morning. His steady thrift won him lands and tenements near the old abbey, of the yearly value of four-and-forty pounds, and, as honest Stow says approvingly, "having no children, with the consent of his wife (who survived him, and was a virtuous good woman), he gave the same lands wholly to Christ's Hospital, to the relief of the innocent and fatherless children."

The Great Fire, raging up eastward from Pudding-lane, did not forget to look in at Christ's Hospital, injuring the south

front, and burning the church in Newgate-street. In 1672, Charles the Second, roused by Sir Robert Clayton, ordered the Exchequer to pay an annuity of three hundred and seventy pounds ten shillings to the Hospital, and also a seven years' donation of one thousand pounds, an old debt due to the Hospital from the crown, and with much difficulty wrung from it. This same worthy Sir Robert Clayton and Sir Patience Ward took good care this gold went to found a mathematical school, where forty of the Bluecoat boys could study navigation, five of them being examined every six months by the Brethren of the Trinity House, and ten of them being yearly sent to sea. The King's Boys, as they are called, though Sir Robert was the real benefactor, used to be presented to the reigning king on New Year's Day, and afterwards on the queen's birthday, but the quaint custom (duly recorded in a large dull picture by Verro in the great hall) was discontinued during the insanity of George the Third. The boys on the king's foundation wear on their left shoulders a badge, with allegorical figures upon it representing arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, to distinguish them from the Twelves, or lower mathematical school, who wear their badges on the right shoulder. The Twos form another class, originated by a bequest of a Mr. Stock, in 1780, who left three thousand pounds to maintain four boys (those bearing the name of Stock preferred), two to be taught navigation, and two to be brought up to trades.

The rebuilding of the south front, in 1675, was attended with interesting circumstances, and proves to us what good, charitable, and wise men some of those old London merchants were. That same worthy Sir Robert Clayton, governor of the Hospital, who extorted the money from Charles the Second, was seized with a severe illness, from which, in spite of many doctors, he recovered. There was faith even in those evil days, and he arose from his sick-bed impressed with the desire to make some acknowledgment to God for his merciful goodness. Consulting his partner, Mr. Morice, and his best friend, Mr. Firmin, he resolved to rebuild the south front of Christ's Hospital, still in ruins from the Great Fire. He kept his name concealed, and spent seven thousand pounds on the good work. When Charles the Second sold himself to France, and, trusting to our enemies, grew more lawless and despotic than ever, he deprived the City of its charter, and removed Sir Robert

from the government of the Hospital. Then it was that Mr. Firmin spoke out, and told the time-serving governors what a benefactor they had displaced. In 1680, Sir John Frederick, another City man, gave five thousand pounds to rebuild the great hall at his sole expense. Three years later the governors founded the juvenile school at Hertford, where forty girls are still taught to knit yellow stockings, and four hundred boys learn to wear them. Generosity is contagious, and the old City merchants had large souls. In 1694, Sir John Moore, whose grave statue still smiles benignantly on generation after generation of yellow stockings, founded the writing school at an expense of five thousand pounds. In 1705, Sir Francis Child, the banker at Temple Bar, and a friend of Pope, rebuilt, at his own expense, the ward over the east cloister, as a worn inscription still testifies; and in 1724, Mr. Travers, another generous benefactor, arose, who gave a nautical turn to the school for ever by leaving money enough to educate forty or fifty sons of naval lieutenants. A century after the writing school a new grammar school was built on the north side of the ditch. An infirmary was erected in 1722, and in 1824 the Duke of York laid the first stone of the new hall, which was designed by Mr. Shaw, the architect of St. Dunstan's, and was opened in 1829. This huge chamber, of rather flimsy Tudor, one hundred and eighty-seven feet long, and eighty-one feet wide, stands on the site of the old City wall, and of the refectory of the Grey Friars. At five tables the Blues, whether Grecians, King's Boys, Twelves, or Twos, dine daily. The dietary of the boys is still somewhat monastic; the breakfast, till 1824, was plain bread and beer, and the dinner three times a week consisted only of milk-porridge, rice-milk, and pea-soup. The old school rhyme, imperishable as the Iliad, runs:

Sunday, all saints;
Monday, all souls;
Tuesday, all trenchers;
Wednesday, all bowls;
Thursday, tough jack;
Friday, no better;
Saturday, pea-soup with bread
and butter.

The boys, like the friars in the old refectory, still eat their meat off wooden trenchers, and ladle their soup with wooden spoons from wooden bowls. The beer is brought up in leather jacks, and retailed in small piggins. Charles Lamb does not speak highly of the food. The small beer was of the smallest, and tasted of its leather re-

ceptacle. The milk-porridge was blue and tasteless, the pea-soup coarse and choking. The mutton was roasted to shreds. The boiled beef was poisoned with marigolds. Worst of all, the nurses used to carry away boldly, for their own table, one of every two joints scrupulously weighed out by the matrons for the boys' dinners. There was a curious custom at Christ's Hospital in Lamb's time never to touch "gags" (the fat of fresh boiled beef), and a Blue would have blushed, as at the exposure of some heinous immorality, to have been detected eating that forbidden portion of his allowance of animal food, the whole of which, while he was in health, was little more than sufficient to allay his hunger. The same, or even greater refinement, was shown in the rejection of certain kinds of sweet cake. What gave rise to these supererogatory penances, these self-denying ordinances? The gag-eater was held as equivalent to a ghoul, loathed, shunned, and insulted. Of a certain juvenile monster of this kind Lamb tells us one of his most charming anecdotes, droll and tender as his own exquisite humour. A gag-eater was observed to carefully gather the fat left on the table, and to secretly stow away the disreputable morsels in the settle at his bedside. A dreadful rumour ran that he secretly devoured them at midnight; but he was watched again and again, and it was not so. At last, on a leave-day, he was marked carrying out of bounds a large blue check handkerchief. That, then, was the accursed thing. It was suggested that he sold it to beggars. Henceforward he moped alone. No one spoke to him. No one played with him. Still he persevered. At last two boys traced him to a large worn-out house inhabited by the very poor, such as then stood in Chancery-lane with open doors and common staircases. The gag-eater stole up four flights of stairs, and the wicket was opened by an old woman meanly clad. Suspicion being now certainty, the spies returned with cruel triumph to tell the steward. He investigated the matter with a kind and patient sagacity, and the result was, that the supposed mendicants turned out to be really the honest parents of the brave gag-eater. "This young stork, at the expense of his good name, had all this while only been feeding the old birds." "The governors on this occasion," says Lamb, "much to their honour, voted a present relief to the family, and presented the boy with a silver medal. The lesson which the steward read upon rash judgment,

on the occasion of publicly delivering the medal, I believe would not be lost upon his auditory. I had left school then, but I well remember the tall shambling youth, with a cast in his eye, not at all calculated to conciliate hostile prejudices. I have since seen him carrying a baker's basket. I think I heard he did not do quite so well by himself as he had done by the old folks."

In Lamb's time the punishments at Christ's Hospital were extremely severe. Absconders wore fetters for the first offence. There were regular dungeons then, and runaways and other offenders for the second time were treated as if in Newgate. The cells were little square bins, where a boy could just lie at his length upon straw and a blanket (mattresses were afterwards substituted), and the peep of light, let in askance from prison-like orifices, was barely enough to read by. Here poor children, just torn from their mothers' apron-strings, were locked in alone all day, only seeing the porter who brought the bread and water, but who was not allowed to speak, or the still less agreeable beadle, who came twice a week to call out the pale and scared culprit for his periodical chastisement. At night the poor little wretch was left alone to his terror. One or two instances of lunacy or attempted suicide at length convinced the governors of the impolicy of this part of the sentence, and the midnight torture was dispensed with. This fancy of dungeons for children sprang from Howard's brain, "for which," says Lamb, "(saving the reverence due to holy Paul), methinks I could willingly spit upon his statue." For the third offence the incorrigible offender was exposed in a sort of san-benito, like a lamplighter's cap and jacket. In the hall, in the presence of all his comrades, he received his final punishment. The beadle, in complete uniform, was the executioner. The steward was also present, and two governors attended to see that no stripes fell short. If the beadle turned pale, a glass of brandy was administered to him. The scourging was after the old Roman fashion, long and stately. The lictors accompanied the criminal quite round the hall. The boys were generally too faint to note much, but report went that the victim's naked back grew slashed and livid. The disgraced boy was then handed over in his san-benito to his angry friends, or, if an orphan and friendless, to his parish officer, who always

waited for such criminals at the hall-gate, to cuff him clear out of Eden. These punishments, monastic in their severity and ruthless in their execution, were evidently founded on the tradition of the school being a charity. When it ceased to be so, such punishments became a mere disgraceful anomaly.

But let us get back into the sunshine, the true atmosphere of happy boyhood. Those were merry days with the Blues when, on long summer afternoons, they would sally out to the New River, and, in the fields near Newington, "wanton like young dace," or troutlets in the pool, living for hours in the water, never caring for dressing when they had once stripped. Then there were the ever-repeated visits to the lions in the Tower, where, known to every warder, the Blues, by ancient privilege and courtesy immemorial, had a prescriptive right to admission—not to mention the favourite games of leap-frog and bait the bear, in which the school excelled. There were, too, the solemn, old-fashioned processions through the City at Easter, with the lord mayor's pleasant largess of buns, wine, and sixpence, "with the festive questions and civic pleasantries of the dispensing aldermen, which were more to us than all the rest of the banquet." Nor does the delightful chronicler forget the stately suppers in public, "when the well-lighted hall, and the confluence of well-dressed company who came to see us, made the whole look more like a concert or assembly than a scene of a plain bread-and-butter collation." Then there was the grave annual Latin oration upon Saint Matthew's Day (now altered), when the senior Grecian, in quaint Erasmian dress, perched on a table, dilates to mayor and aldermen, who wisely pretend to understand the ancient language spoken in the fine fluent continental manner, the praises of those patriarch Blues: the learned Camden and pious Stillingfleet, or oftener Joshua Barnes, the editor of Euripides in Queen Anne's time, and perennial Markland, a later and equally eminent Greek critic. The hymns and anthems and the well-toned organ fitly heralded the festive joys of Christmas, "when," as Lamb says, "the richest of us would club our stock to have a gaudy day, sitting round the fire, replenished with logs, and the penniless and he that could contribute nothing partook in all the mirth, and in some of the substantialities, of the feasting." Nor does the immortaliser of the fine old school

forget the nightly Advent carols sung at ten P.M., and for which Lamb, when he was sent to bed at seven, used to lie awake to hear the fresh young voices of the Grecians and monitors, till he felt transported to the fields of Bethlehem, and the song sung by angels' voices to the shepherds.

But again to tune our harps, as the bigger wigg'd poets say, to graver strains. The school in the old times was, like the discipline, Spartan enough. The King's Boys, roughly nurtured by William Wales, a stern, north country sailor, who had sailed with Captain Cook, grew up hardy, brutal, graceless, often wicked, and were the ceaseless terror of the younger boys, who ran shuddering from the cloisters whenever the cry was raised, "The first order is coming." These janizaries of the school were the athletes of the Hospital; they never moved out of the way for any one, and many a Cheapside apprentice and greasy butcher-boy of Newgate Market felt the impetus of their fists, and had ocular demonstration of their stubborn valour. The system of fagging, in its very worst form, prevailed, or rather raged, in Christ's Hospital at the end of the last century. The young brutes, as Lamb justly calls them, used to wake the last eleven lads in the dormitory in the coldest winter nights (time after time), to thrash them with leather thongs because there had been talking heard after they were gone to bed. The same tyranny drove the younger lads away from the fires in snow time, and, under the heaviest penalties, forbade them to drink water during the summer nights. One monitor (afterwards naturally enough seen on the hulks) actually branded, with a red-hot iron, a small boy who had offended him, and nearly starved forty minor lads by exacting from them, daily, half their bread to pamper a young ass, whom, with the connivance of his flame, the nurse's daughter, he had contrived to smuggle in and stable on the leads of the ward.

Of course Christ's Hospital had ghosts. How could an old friary, where wicked Queen Isabella, the tormentor of her husband, lay, be without them? Yet were they of a lowly kind. In one of the cloisters was a hollow in a stone, which used in Leigh Hunt's time to be attributed by some to the angry stamping of the ghost of a beadle's wife. There was also a traditional horror in the school of a mysterious being only seen at night, and called the "Fazzer." Like the African Mumbo Jumbo, the fazzer was

perfectly known to be only one of the big boys disguised, yet an epidemical fear invested him with somewhat of a supernatural character. The fazzer's amiable habit was to pull small boys out of bed, or to fazz (pull) their hair in a goblin way. The fazzer always disguised his face, and sometimes appeared in his white shirt, dumb and motionless, in the moonlight. "One time," says Leigh Hunt, in his agreeable way, "I saw this phenomenon under circumstances more than usually unearthly. It was a fine moonlight night. I was then in a ward the casement of which looked on the churchyard. My bed was under the second window from the east, not far from the statue of Edward the Sixth. Happening to wake in the middle of the night, and cast up my eyes, I saw on a bedstead near me, and in one of the casements, a figure in its shirt, which I took for the fazzer. The room was silent, the figure motionless. I fancied that half the boys in the ward were glaring at it without daring to speak. It was poor C—— (who afterwards went mad) gazing at that lunar orb, which might afterwards be supposed to have malignantly fascinated him."

The upper grammar master in the great times of Coleridge, Lamb, and Leigh Hunt, was a cruel pedant named Boyer. He was a good verbal scholar, and a conscientious teacher, but of a hard, passionate nature, ruling by terror, and disdaining love. In one of the many pictures left us of this school in its old days, he is sketched as a short punchy man, with large face and hands, long plebeian upper lip, close cruel piggyish eyes, veiled by spectacles, and an aquiline nose. He dressed in black, and wore a powdered wig; his sleeves were short, as if to leave his strong hands more play for flogging, and he wore very tight grey worsted stockings over what Leigh Hunt playfully calls "little balustrade legs." His weak side was carpentering; he generally carried a carpenter's rule in an express side-pocket. His favourite oath of vengeance was, "Odd's my life, sirrah."

"He had two wigs," Lamb says, "both pedantic, but of different shades. The one serene and smiling, fresh powdered, betokening a mild day; the other, an old, discoloured, unkempt, angry caxon, denoting frequent and bloody execution. I have known him double his knotty fist at a poor, trembling child (the maternal milk hardly dry upon its lips), with a 'Sirrah, do you presume to set your wits at me?'"

In gentler moments, when satiated by heavy doses of Latin and much flogging, he was known to whip a boy and read the parliamentary debates at the same time, a paragraph and a lash alternately. When you were out in your lessons, he turned upon you a round, staring, blank eye, like that of a fish, and he had a spiteful way of pinching under the chin, and lifting boys off the ground by the lobes of their ears. Coleridge describes Boyer coming up to him as he was crying, the first day of his return after the holidays, and saying:

"Boy! the school is your father. Boy! the school is your mother. Boy! the school is your brother. The school is your sister. The school is your first cousin, and your second cousin, and all the rest of your relations. Boy! let's have no more crying."

Boyer used to send to Field, the quiet, idle, gentleman-like under-master, to borrow a birch; then remark, with a sardonic grin, to one of his satellites, "How neat and fresh the twigs look." When the tyrant was on his death-bed, Coleridge said of him with droll pity, "May all his faults be forgiven, and may he be wafted to bliss by little cherub boys, all head and wings, that there may be no foundation for future reproach as to his sublimity infirmities." As for the second master, Field, his boys, of whom Lamb was, were happy as birds, and spent their time (for they never got beyond Phædrus) in making paper sundials, weaving cat's-cradles, playing at French and English, or making peas dance on the end of a tin pipe.

The funerals in the cloisters in Lamb's time must have been very impressive; and Lamb specially mentions the interment of the portly steward Perry, when nearly every one of the five hundred boys wore a black ribbon, or something to denote respect.

Of the greatest of the three great modern worthies of Christ's Hospital, Coleridge, Lamb, and Leigh Hunt, we have a fine Vandyck sketch from the hand of the second. "Come back into memory," says Elia, in one of his noblest and highest moods, "as thou wert in the spring-time of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee, the dark pillar not yet turned—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—logician, metaphysician, bard! How have I seen the casual passer through the cloisters stand still entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the speech and the garb of the young *Mirandola*), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mys-

teries of Jamblichus or Plotinus (for even in those years that waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar; while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the inspired charity boy! Many were the 'wit combats' (to dally awhile with the words of old Fuller) between him and C. V. Le Grice, which, too, I beheld, like a great Spanish galleon and an English man-of-war." Master Coleridge, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in his performance. C. V. L., like the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention.

Lamb himself, who had left just before Leigh Hunt entered the school, is described by the latter, as seen by him when revisiting the school. His walk was sidling and peculiar, and the boys, susceptible of his quaintness of manner and costume, called him "Guy." Lamb has left two splendid essays on his old school. In one he takes the rose-coloured side, and writes as a rich man's son; in the second, bantering himself, he writes as if poor, and touches on some faults and unhappinesses of the place.

Like Lamb, Leigh Hunt, from having a slight stammer, never rose to be one of the supreme Grecians, and did not, therefore, pass on to the university. He was at Christ's Hospital just the loving, impressionable creature that he afterwards continued—sturdy for the right, devoted in his friendship, and full of sensitive impulses.

Among the contemporaries of Lamb were Thomas Fanshaw Middleton, afterwards the scholarly Bishop of Calcutta; Richards, author of a spirited Oxford prize poem, the *Aboriginal Britons*; Barnes, afterwards editor for so long of the *Times*, a man who, but for dreaming over Fielding, and chatting over his glass, might have done greater things.

Nor can we close the list of Leigh Hunt's contemporaries without mentioning that most clever and ingenious scholar, Mitchell, the translator of *Aristophanes*.

There is a curious history attached to the portrait of a Mr. St. Arnaud, the grandfather of a benefactor to the Hospital, which hangs in the treasury. By the terms of St. Arnaud's will, all the money he left passes to the University of Oxford from the Bluecoat School if this picture is ever lost or given away, and the same deprivation occurs if this picture is not produced

once a year at the general court, and also shown, on requisition, to the vice-chancellor of Oxford or his deputy. As the St. Arnauts had intermarried in the Middle Ages with the luckless Stuarts, there is a tradition in the school that this picture is the portrait of the Pretender, but this is an unfounded notion.

GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S NARRATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THAT STATE OF LIFE," &c.

IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VI.

WHAT I had long foreseen came to pass the next day. Mr. Ridgway formally proposed to Assunta; and was rejected. That a man of his acute perceptions should not have been prepared for this result to his wooing seemed difficult to believe. Had Miss Fleming been a different sort of person, it might have been looked for that the disgrace and banishment of Mr. Walbrooke's heir should have inclined her to view with favour a marriage which presented so many solid advantages as the one now offered to her. But Mr. Ridgway was too keen-sighted to misjudge, though he was incapable of valuing at its true worth, the character of the woman whom he now desired to raise to the throne of Hapsbury. She had had a girlish fancy for the "good-looking young calf," who had so signally disgraced himself last night, and she must feel heartily ashamed of him. On the other hand, she had often shown a certain amount of pleasure in his, Mr. Ridgway's, society; it required no uncommon vanity in a man who had cultivated the arts of pleasing for nearly fifty years, to believe that the contrast between coarseness and refinement must make itself felt by Assunta at this moment, very much to the advantage of the latter. As to love, he would probably have smiled sarcastically at the question of its existence, on one side or the other. She was a charming young woman; agreeable and distinguished in person, and sufficiently intelligent to be receptive of his instruction, at such times as he might feel disposed to converse—for your brilliant men of society are apt to be taciturn in strict domesticity. And as to himself, why, he was—what he was; he had never indulged in illusions as to girls falling in love with him, or he might have been captured, ~~ere~~ this, by one of the numerous young ladies who, at various periods of his career, had desired to reign at Hapsbury. Fortunately he did not believe in *les grandes passions*; in his own

case, at least. No; love was an entirely unnecessary ingredient in the marriage-mixture: liking was a solvent of sufficient strength to melt the harsher quantities of that mixture into a cool and not unpalatable beverage.

Thus, only, could I account for the blunder Mr. Ridgway committed, in believing that he had only to propose to be accepted. He regarded Assunta as too sensible to waste her life on a vain shadow; her eyes had been open to the futility of any expectations she might have formed with regard to Harry: and now that the substantial reality of independence, coupled with an agreeable companion, was offered her, how could she refuse? But she did refuse; much to his surprise, something to his annoyance, and more to his contempt. She had not a philosophic soul; she was no better than other women, then, in this respect, that she allowed an idiotic fancy to usurp the place of some more rational feeling, which was all that philosophy needed to enable two human beings to live placidly together.

He returned to Hapsbury that afternoon, and Assunta was left to the mercy of Mr. Walbrooke. What that mercy was may be gathered from the fact that he was closeted with her for upwards of an hour; after which I was unable to get speech of her, for she pleaded fatigue to retire to her bed. The next morning I received news of my father's serious illness, which called me suddenly to London; but I managed to have a few minutes' conversation alone with Assunta in the library before my departure. She looked sallow and worn, poor child, that morning—the world and Mr. Ridgway would have said almost plain. To me she never seemed more lovable and interesting. She sat down wearily on one of the great leather chairs, and leaned her head on her hand. Then she told me something of what had passed between the master of the house and herself, and of what she felt to be the peculiar and terrible difficulty of her present position.

"He is so kind in his own way—he has been more like a relation to me than a master—that when he tells me how fatal it would be to all his views for Harry that we should marry, I feel as if I were a monster of ingratitude to oppose him. If I could be persuaded that it was really for Harry's benefit to give me up, I would show him the example—cost me what it might, Mr. Luttrell. It is this breaks my heart. I have not slept all night, thinking what I ought to do. Mr. Walbrooke says

I am mistaken in fancying I have much influence over Harry; and, alas! I almost feel as if he were right. I am afraid it cannot be very great, since he can be swept hither and thither by every impulse of the moment. I ask myself, 'Shall I not be as a millstone round his neck? Will the day not come when he will regret having married the penniless foundling?'

"Never; unless he do so precipitately," I replied at once. "And this I am sure you will not consent to. You have but one course, both of you: to try and wear out the squire's patience. It is a case of two to one; for all this family are so attached to you that I am sure they will not hear of your leaving them."

She coloured, and with a sad little smile said, "Unless it is; as the maids say, 'to better myself,' or what Mr. Walbrooke considers is to better me. For that he is urgent—nay, positively angry at my rejection of wealth and social position. What are they all to me without Harry?"

"Is it final," I asked, "this rejection?"

"Final," she replied; and no more passed between us on the subject. We returned again to Harry. She bitterly deplored his having by this fresh outrage yet further incensed his uncle. "Mr. Walbrooke says that until I marry, or that Harry consents to give me up, he must not return here. That is hard, is it not, Mr. Luttrell?—to separate Harry and his uncle, who has been like a father to him? My darling boy will never give me up, I know that, but I cannot be his ruin—I, who hoped to save him; for it will be ruin if this quarrel between him and his uncle continues. Mr. Walbrooke candidly told me that he would never forgive Harry's marrying against his consent. He said, 'My nephew must marry a woman of some social weight, to lift him up, instead of dragging him down.' It sounds worldly and heartless to me, Mr. Luttrell, but perhaps it is true, for all that. If I only knew what was right. If I only knew what was best for my darling!"

The sad eyes were full of tears, but they did not fall.

"Will you write to me, dear Miss Fleming?" I asked, with as steady a voice as I could command. "I think you know that I am your true friend, as I am Harry's, and that I shall always give you such advice as I should to a dear sister. My last word is, 'Do nothing rashly.'"

She promised to write, and thanked me warmly; then we parted. Nothing could be kinder than Mr. Walbrooke's farewell.

"You must come to us again in June, Luttrell, whether Harry is here or not—whether he is here or not," he repeated, doggedly. "The young man's obstinacy is such that unless circumstances occur—which I am hopeful they may—to force him into submission, it is very probable he may continue to put himself into opposition to me. And as long as he does so, he will not come to the Grange. But, remember, we shall be very glad to see you. There is that Sir Joshua, you know, which you have begun to copy—you must return to finish it."

But the copy of Sir Joshua remains unfinished to this day; and, possibly, still adorns some attic at the Grange. I have never seen it or the Grange since that January morning in 1827.

CHAPTER VII.

My poor father's was a long illness, and I was constantly in attendance on him for many weeks. He died in March, and about the same time I learnt, indirectly, that Mr. Fleming was dead, leaving a widow and four children in very poor circumstances. I had received one or two letters from Assunta, giving a sad account of her tormented state of mind, Harry's name being now tabooed in the family circle, all communications between him and the squire being of the briefest and driest character, and Mr. Ridgway being now a more constant guest than ever. Then came an interval when I heard nothing from the Grange, being myself too busily and painfully occupied to write more than the brief announcement of my father's death. I had only one letter from Harry, and that was not very satisfactory. It was, indeed, fuller than ever of his passionate attachment to Assunta; but of this I needed no assurance. I should have been better pleased to learn that it was producing some permanent effect on his life and character; but as to the one he was silent, and that the reckless impetuosity of the other was uncontrolled as ever was clear from the violent terms in which he wrote of his uncle. I had, moreover, the opportunity of learning through a friend, whose brother was at Oxford, that young Walbrooke's efforts at steadiness were spasmodic at best. He belonged to a fast set, and though he sometimes absented himself from their "wines" for a few days, the least vexation, or, it might be, the devil within him, unaided by any circumstance from without, drove him to those festive boards, from which he was

too often seen reeling home in the early morning light.

All this was painful enough to me, and doubly so, as I did not see any hopeful termination to the existing state of things. In April I wrote to Assunta, but of course abstained from any allusion to what I had heard of Harry. I wrote but a few lines, asking for news of her; and some days later I received the following reply.

April 20th, 1827.

DEAR MR. LUTTRELL,—Thank you for your kind letter. We have both had a heavy sorrow since I last wrote to you; added to which I have suffered much in other ways. You ask me to tell you everything about myself, or I should not think of intruding my own troubles upon you so soon. Dear Mr. Luttrell, there are griefs far worse than the death of those we love. Henry's conduct is driving me to despair. He has been sent away from Oxford—"rusticated" I think they call it—for a time, in consequence of some wild outbreaks. What will become of him? The doors of this house, his natural home, are shut against him; he will not go to Lady Arden's, who, it seems, spoke disparagingly of me when he was there in the winter. Alas! you see, on every side, I am the barrier between him and his relations; and Mr. Walbrooke's great kindness to me makes it all the worse. He has given me fifty pounds to send to poor dear Mrs. Fleming, and has promised to pay for little Charlie's schooling. Why cannot he rest satisfied with these acts of true benevolence, without trying to force me into a marriage with one man, while my heart is another's? Dear Mr. Luttrell, I have been so torn asunder by conflicting feelings during the past week, that I scarcely know how I have arrived at the resolution I have formed to leave the Grange, which has been my home for the last five years; to bid it good-bye, probably for ever! A simple stratagem will enable me to do this without proclaiming my real motive. Mrs. Fleming is left in so forlorn and piteous a condition, with her four little children, that it appears natural I should go to her; though I fear that, in point of fact, I shall be more of a burden than a help, and must soon seek another situation. But I shall be no longer in the way here; I know they would never send me from them; but when I am gone, dear Harry can return, and all will then be well, I hope, between him and the squire. I will not tell you what it has cost me to come to this resolve. I know it is right,

and that is my only consolation. The alternative was one I could not bring myself to accept. I have said nothing as yet about my plan; I dread all discussion so much, I must speak and act almost simultaneously, for I feel that Mr. Walbrooke will strenuously oppose my going. I cannot bring myself yet to think that all must be at an end between Harry and me; but oh! Mr. Luttrell, if my love should be doing him harm, instead of good! That thought haunts me. I was arrogant enough to hope that I stood between him and much evil. Alas! it is not so, I can deceive myself no longer; God knows what I ought to do; and yet, when I pray for guidance, I seem to get no answer to my prayers. Forgive this.

From yours,

Ever sincerely and gratefully,
ASSUNTA FLEMING.

As I pondered over this letter, I could not but feel that she was right. That her presence at the Grange should prevent Harry's return there, was clearly not defensible, not even politic. When she was really gone, when they had lost the charm of her gracious presence, they would, perhaps, understand her true worth better, and feel how inexpressibly lucky Harry was to have gained the heart of such a woman. They, or rather the squire, for Mrs. Walbrooke was of no account in this calculation, might gradually be brought to see that Harry's real welfare was dependent on this marriage. It was of importance that he should be at the Grange now, out of the reach of temptations to which he was constantly falling a prey, in his present condition of passionate, irritable, unsatisfied love. I believed that, on the whole, Assunta's resolution was wise, with a view to the ultimate happiness of both.

That same afternoon, as I was painting, and wondering what had become of Harry, he walked in, looking, to my surprise, in better spirits than I could have expected; but such was the quicksilver of his nature; to rise—and fall as rapidly—with the varying temperature of his hopes. I saw at once that he did not know of Assunta's leaving the Grange.

"I have been too down in the mouth, lately, to write to you, Geoff; but you'll forgive me, eh? I am sent from Oxford for the remainder of this term, for being in a row; but we won't talk about disagreeable things. Don't look so grave—I couldn't help it—I couldn't, indeed! And good comes out of evil sometimes. I have got a

stroke of luck which will make me independent of the squire, I hope, and then I can marry Assunta to-morrow."

He rubbed his hands with a boyish glee, and his whole face beamed.

"Independent of your uncle!" I repeated. "What do you mean? How on earth can good come of the evil of disgracing yourself at Oxford?"

"Well, in this way, Geoff. The fellow with whom I got into this row—indeed, I might say, who got me into this row, and who was leaving Oxford this term, so he didn't care for himself—is the son of a Scotch wine merchant in the City. He is a thundering good fellow, and when he heard say that I couldn't go to the Grange, he insisted on my coming to stay at his father's here in London. On our way up I told him something of my position, and said I would do anything in the world that would give me a small, certain independence. He came to me last night, and said he had been talking to his father, who offered to take me into the house, and give me three hundred a year. My work would be chiefly to *tout*—to go among my friends, and try to get orders. I was a little staggered at first. It isn't the kind of thing I've been used to, but——"

"I should think not! And for a wine merchant, too! the last trade of all others, Harry, you should have anything to do with. You are ill-fitted in every way for this kind of life. I hope you will not think of it."

"Indeed, but I do, though. I have made up my mind to accept Mr. Strahan's offer. There's no disgrace in 'touting,' Geoff?"

"I don't say that there is any disgrace, but I know that your uncle would never forgive you. It would be the most suicidal step you could take; and when I say that, Harry, I mean something more than as regards your worldly prospects. You know your own fatal tendency—you will be constantly exposed to the temptation of 'tasting' wines, and not even Assunta's influence, I fear, will counterbalance this."

"I know myself better than you do, Geoff," he said, colouring. "I don't drink when I am happy. I drink when I am dispirited—I drink from a craving for excitement—to drown thought. When I have my darling for my own, when no one can separate us, I shall want nothing else, neither drink nor any other excitement."

I brought forward every argument I could to move him from his purpose; and a great many bad ones among the number: to wit, that Mr. Strahan only wanted

Harry's name to widen, and, it might be, to raise the Strahan connexion: that this was not honest work, which I always respected, but the base letting out on hire of a social influence to advance the interests of a trade. To which, of course, the rejoinder was, that Mr. Strahan's motives were nothing to Harry; and that as long as he could honestly recommend the wine, he saw no reason why he should not do so as generally as possible. Then I pointed out that it was impossible he could support a wife upon three hundred a year.

"I have a hundred and fifty of my own," he replied, "if my uncle were to take from me every farthing; which, for Assunta's sake, I hardly think he would do."

In short, he was so full of the scheme that nothing I could say made the smallest impression. Poor boy! His exhilaration lasted but a few hours. The day but one after this he rushed into my room, early in the morning, with a letter in his hand. He was pale with excitement, his passionate nostrils dilated, his lips quivering. He neither shook my hand nor spoke a word of greeting; he only held out the letter, and said in a hoarse voice:

"Read that."

I saw at once that it was from Assunta; but I was far from guessing its contents. Here is the letter itself, which fell into my hands years after. The paper is yellow; the ink is faded, but the pure and noble spirit breathes through it fresh as when those words were written.

April 22nd, 1829.

MY OWN DEAREST HARRY,—I sit down with a sorrowful heart, knowing that what I have to write will give you great pain. Ever since we parted, Harry, nearly four months ago, there has been a conflict in me, between my own selfish love, and a growing fear—a growing belief, that it was best for you that all between us should be at an end. If I could think, as I once did, that by ever being your wife I should do you more good than I could bring you harm, nothing should have shaken me. But, alas! dearest Harry, I have been shaken. I do not reproach you; I would not willingly add one pang to your sorrow, dear. I know that women cannot judge of men's temptations. All I mean is, that the existing state of things seems to be doing you injury in all ways, as regards your family, as regards your career, as regards your own self, which is far worse than all. I have not the power to guard you from this last evil, which would be my

only justification for severing you from your home, and for allowing you to sacrifice all your worldly prospects. Your uncle, whose character you scarcely understand as well as I do, in spite of all his great kindness to me, will *never* be reconciled to our marriage. Your youth would be wasted in pursuit of a dream, if you waited for his consent; if we married without it, Mr. Walbrooke would disinherit you at once. He has told me this himself. It would be mere sentimentality to pretend that such would not be a great misfortune to one bred up as you have been. But, as regards myself, there might be a yet worse misfortune. If you should not have strength to support poverty, Harry; if it should happen that, in order to drown your cares, you lowered morally, under my eyes, day by day; if the time ever came when I felt that you reproached me, in your heart, with being the cause of your degradation—I think I should kill myself. I could never survive the agony of such a thought as that. And therefore, dearest, I have been brought, with many bitter tears, to believe that everything between us had best be—I will not say *forgotten*, perhaps that is impossible, but, at an end. I am leaving this house, which has been my home for five years, to-morrow morning. You must not think I am driven away. Mr. Walbrooke has opposed my departure by every means in his power; but my eyes have been opened to see what is right. When I am gone, you will return to your natural home; for you must let no foolish resentment now prevent a reconciliation with your uncle. Oh! my darling, do not think too harshly of me for breaking my word; you would not, if you knew all I had suffered. This is the last time I shall ever write to you, and there is something still at my heart which I would add. It is this. Although we are parted for ever in this world, I shall be comparatively happy in my obscurity if I hear of you as beloved and respected. I shall glory in your honour, dearest Harry. I shall die in your shame.

ASSUNTA.

P.S. I am going to poor Mrs. Fleming. She has moved into the country.

I had walked to the window to read this letter, and I remained there, with my back

to Harry, unable to speak for some minutes after I had finished and refolded it. Noble heart! What would I not have given for such love! Was it all to be wasted? I felt more bitter towards Harry at that moment than I had ever done before.

It was he who broke silence at last.

"They have driven her to it, Geoff, and, by Heaven, I'll never forgive them."

"And you, Harry? Have you only reproaches for others and none for yourself?"

"Can't you see, man," he rejoined fiercely, "that I'm half mad with remorse without my saying so? But it isn't that. Though she thinks me such a reprobate, she would never have given me up (she hasn't now, in her heart) if they hadn't persuaded her it was for my good. But they will find themselves mistaken. She may write what she likes; I shall never give her up. And I'll be hanged if I go back to the Grange."

"What do you mean to do, then?"

"Go in for the wine business. I'm more determined than ever now. I shall cut Oxford, and am going to write to the squire to tell him so."

"You will only grieve Assunta by doing all this, Harry."

"I can't help it, Geoff; it is his doing. I'll be independent somehow, I'm resolved; and so my darling girl shall know. What do I care for his money compared with her? I shall tell her that nothing she can say makes any difference. She is mine, and I am hers, until she marries another man—and the squire may leave his property to whom he likes."

All argument was useless; I went over the old ground again and again, but to no purpose; he was resolutely set against "cringing" to the squire, as he called it, and declared that he couldn't sit at meat with him, feeling as he did at present. Had he known where to find Assunta, I believe he would have set off that night. As it was, he wrote to her, directing his letter to the Grange, to be forwarded; and he wrote likewise to his uncle.

On MONDAY, the 4th of DECEMBER,

WILL BE PUBLISHED THE

EXTRA DOUBLE NUMBER
FOR CHRISTMAS,
1871.

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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS, JUN.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER X. TRACKED.

THE startling news which Mrs. Pickering conveyed to Mr. Drage seemed literally to take away his breath. He pressed one hand on his heart and leaned his head on the other, which was supported by the writing-table at which he was seated. He remained in this position for a few moments, until the spasm had passed away. When he raised his head his voice was scarcely under his command as he said:

"This is very dreadful news! Is it perfectly to be relied on?"

"I have already given you my authority. I came upon it by the merest accident last night as I was reading aloud to Sir Geoffry. I have taken a copy of the paragraph, and it is there." She laid the paper on the desk before him. He took it up and read it attentively. Then he said:

"It is frank enough, certainly, and prints the names plainly, and in full. If you have any doubt as to its authenticity, I think we can make ourselves certain on that point through my father."

"Your father, Mr. Drage?"

"Yes. He is, as you know, somewhat potential in the City, where"—pointing to the paper—"both the late husband of the lady and your—and Mr. Vane seem to have been engaged. If I were to write to my father he could doubtless make inquiries, and ascertain if the news herein contained is false or true."

"I have little doubt of its truth," said Madge, "but still less of the identity of the person spoken of with my husband. Accepting this, what am I to do?"

"You must take action of some kind, Mrs. Pickering," said Mr. Drage, nervously. "It would be impossible for you to remain quiet, now that you have been placed in possession of this information."

"I wish the wretched newspaper had never come into the place," cried Madge. "I was living quietly enough, and should have continued to do so, no matter what had happened in the outer world, so long as the knowledge of it was kept from me. What benefit has my learning this news been to me, or to any one? It has completely destroyed the peace of mind which I have been so long in acquiring; and, after all, what good can I do? what harm can I prevent?"

"You must, indeed, have been much upset," said the rector, gravely, "for I should scarcely recognise that remark as coming from one who, in general, thinks so little of herself, and so much of her opportunities of serving her fellow-creatures. Surely you must perceive that you may now be the means of saving this lady from an illegal marriage, and from a life of consequent misery."

"Does one necessarily follow the other?" asked Madge, bitterly. "Mine was a legal marriage, and yet it can scarcely be said to have been a happy one. This woman has been married before, and has had experience of the world. She will know how to humour her husband, and besides, too, she has wealth. I don't think that Philip Vane, having much of his own way, and plenty of money at his command, would be an ineligible companion for such a person. I am by no means prepared to allow that there must necessarily be even the usual amount of married misery in such a union."

The scarlet spot stood out brightly in the rector's cheeks, and he moved forward in

his chair as though about to speak. He managed, however, to check the threatened outburst of his wrath, and said, quietly:

"You are plainly not yourself this morning, Mrs. Pickering; you are the last person in whom I should have expected to find an apologist for outraging a law made both by God and man. I scarcely think we can discuss the matter while you are in this spirit; it would be better for you to allow me to call upon you in a day or two, when the effect of the news which you have thus suddenly learned has somewhat subsided."

There was nothing cruel in this remark, but the words were the harshest which, since his acquaintance with Madge, the rector had ever used towards her; and his manner was marked by a sternness which she had never previously noticed in him.

"I was wrong," she said, frankly, "and you are right in thus reproving me; but I suppose even you will allow that my fate just now is somewhat hard? I have described to you what effect this announcement had upon me when I first saw it last night; I was stupefied. An hour afterwards, when I read it at my leisure, and pondered over it, I was mad, and could have killed Philip Vane had he crossed my path. At that moment I could have killed this woman who is to be his wife! Now, I wish to kill no one, except," she added, with a faint smile, "perhaps, the newspaper-man, whose paragraph has so upset me, and my real desire would be to leave things exactly as they are, to fall into such channels as chance may mark out for them, and to pursue the even tenour of my way."

"That is impossible now, Mrs. Pickering," said the rector, speaking in his usual soft tone and trustful manner. "It is not for us to inquire why you, the person most interested in hearing of this news, should—accidentally, apparently—have had it brought before you. That it was with some wise purpose, I do not doubt, though I cannot say positively; but this I can say positively, that being aware of it, it is your duty to prevent the commission of this crime."

"That can only be done effectually by my seeing this—this lady, and acquainting her with the exact position in which I stand towards the man she is about to marry."

"That I think should be your last resource," said Mr. Drage, after a pause. "Under the old rules of woodcraft, it was not considered a part of sport to give any law to the fox, who might be 'trapped and slain' whenever he could be caught; and no doubt the majority of the world would

class Mr. Vane in this category. But situated as you are with him, it is only fair that, even at this juncture, he should experience better treatment at your hands; and it will be right, I think, that in the first place you should let him know your acquaintance with his project, and your determination to thwart it."

"That would involve my seeing him?" asked Madge.

"Unquestionably," replied the rector; "it is not a matter that could be managed by deputy."

"I could not do that," said Madge, shuddering. "I could not possibly face him alone again."

"You need not be alone," said Mr. Drage; "I will accompany you very willingly if you wish it. As your parish priest and intimate friend, the repository of your confidence, I could go with you on this errand, and——"

"It would be impossible, under any circumstances," cried Madge; "I could not see him again—I will not do it."

"You must," said Mr. Drage, firmly. "It is a matter of duty, and when I have said that to you, I know I need say no more."

There must have been something in this tall, ungainly, fragile man—perhaps it was the earnestness of his manner, or the knowledge on the part of those who heard him, that, in all sincerity, he practised what he preached—which commanded obedience.

After his last words, Madge said, simply, "Very well, I will do as you suggest."

And he knew that his advice would be followed to the letter.

"I need not tell you that you are acting rightly," he said; "you have an intuitive knowledge of it."

"I will do as you advise me," she replied; "but there is one thing which we have not yet settled. How and where am I to find Mr. Philip Vane?"

"I do not imagine there will be much difficulty in tracing him," said the rector. "I will, with your permission, enclose a copy of that paragraph to my father, and, without giving him any reasons, will ask him to find out for me whether the news contained in it is true, and who and what are the persons whose affairs are therein freely discussed. I will ask him to find out what is Mr. Vane's City status, and what his private address."

"You are determined to leave me no loophole," said Madge, with another attempt at a smile.

"Determined," said Mr. Drage, taking her hand. "I have seen you under a great

many phases, and I want you to be successful in this as in all the others."

So the letter was written to the rector's father, and in the interval between its despatch and the receipt of the reply, Madge endeavoured to school herself for the task which she had undertaken to execute. It would be a difficult one she knew right well, but she knew also that her best chance of going through with it successfully was to cultivate the callousness with which for so long a time she had regarded Philip Vane and his affairs, and from which she had only been roused by the sudden shock of the news concerning him. The indignation roused by that news, the strange feeling of jealousy that any one should occupy what was her lawful position, the curious desire to claim that position, which she had long since calmly yielded up, directly she saw it about to be taken by another, all these disturbing sensations had passed away and left her calm and equal-minded as she had been for months, for years previously. Whether or not her equanimity would desert her when she saw her husband face to face, she could not say. She endeavoured to rehearse in her mind all that might probably take place on the occasion of their meeting; all the sneers and brutalities which he would hurl at her, when he heard the object of her visit, and after a certain amount of preparation, she conducted herself, so far as the rehearsal was concerned, to her entire satisfaction.

In about a week's time she received a letter from Mr. Drage, saying that his father's reply had arrived, and he would be glad to see her at the rectory on the first convenient opportunity.

That same day she took occasion to go into town, and found the rector expecting her. When the servant who announced her had retired, Mr. Drage said, with a grave smile:

"You will be more pleased than I am myself with a certain portion of the news which I have to announce to you. My father placed my letter in the hands of a confidential clerk who has been with him for years, and he it is who replies to my inquiries. I will read what he says."

The rector took up a letter lying on the desk before him, and read as follows:

"There would seem to be no doubt about the bona fides of the newspaper paragraph, copy of which was forwarded by you. Have traced paragraph from Anglo-Indian paper (where it was expanded by addition of last lines) to Fashionable Tatler,

where it originally appeared, and have seen receipt for three and six, signed by Rumbold, described as 'hall porter in nobleman's family,' as payment for it. Andreas Bendixen died 5th of June, 1858. Personal property sworn under one hundred and thirty thousand pounds; clear half to widow, other half divided among three brothers, but to remain in the business for ten years. Mrs. Bendixen resides 20k, Harley-street. Sent there—out of town—servant declined to give address. Mr. Philip Vane, general manager, Terra del Fuegos Mining Company, and on various other boards of direction. Private residence, Z 20, the Albany. Sent to both places—said to be out of town. Messenger saw clerks in the City—valet at Albany. Both declined to give Mr. V.'s address, professing not to know it."

"Which portion of this communication is to please me more than it does you?" asked Madge, as he laid down the paper.

"That which states that Mr. Vane's present whereabouts cannot be ascertained," said the rector. "You seemed so averse to meeting him the last time we talked the matter over, that I imagined you would have been glad of the excuse thus afforded you."

"On the contrary," said Madge; "the more I have thought of the matter the more I have seen it from your point of view, and the more am I convinced of the necessity of my taking action in it."

"That necessity seems to me more than ever urgent," said the rector. "Neither of these people are to be found in London; both are simultaneously away from town, and the address of neither can be ascertained. Had not the insertion of that paragraph shown that they evidently courted publicity, I should imagine they had gone away to be married quietly from some friend's house in the country, and to escape from the usual fuss and worry of a fashionable wedding. Even as it is, if we want to prevent this man from carrying his atrocious scheme into operation, I do not think we have any time to lose."

"What more can we do?" asked Madge.

"I am afraid nothing," said the rector, shrugging his shoulders. "I have written to my father's head clerk to renew the inquiries at Mr. Vane's address from day to day, and to let it be known that an important communication awaits him."

So Madge returned home beaten, and dispirited at her failure. The next morning brought a letter from Rose. It ran thus:

DEAREST MADGE,—What they call the London season is over now, and the work at the office has become very much slacker, so the superintendent says I can have my fortnight's holiday now if I like, and I think I should like very much indeed, for the weather is dreadfully hot, and I have been working very hard all the summer, and begin to feel that I want a change. So I write to ask if you can get a holiday at the same time, Madge, and then we might go to some seaside place together, and enjoy ourselves. That would be nicest of all; but if you cannot manage to get away from your duties, I might come down to Springside and go into our old lodging, or one like it, and you could come to see me whenever you were disengaged. If you told Sir Geoffrey Heriot your sister were coming down, I don't suppose that he would make any objection to your being a great deal with me, as he seems, from all you say of him, to be a very kind old man.

For I must see you somewhere, Madge, I must, indeed. I know that no amount of fresh air or change of scene would do me half as much good as a long talk with you, and I shall only fret and worry myself until I have it.

Can you imagine what it is all about, Madge? You are so quick and clever, that I dare say you have guessed already, and indeed I should not be surprised if my previous letters had been filled with no other subject, as I always write to you exactly what I think, and I have scarcely thought about anything else for months. Of course, Madge, I mean Mr. Gerald Hardinge! He has been very kind to me, and I have seen a great deal of him lately; he has lent me plenty of books, and some of his drawings to copy; and the other evening, when I incautiously said something about missing that old piano, which we used to thump and strum away on at Miss Cave's lodgings, Mr. Hardinge asked if I would permit him to hire another for me. I could not sanction this, of course, and said no; but he insisted so strongly, that I had to invent a little story, and tell him that Mrs. Bland would not allow any piano practice in her house. That seemed to satisfy him, for he said Mrs. Bland was a most respectable woman, and I was most happily placed under her charge; and he thought it would be highly inexpedient for me to go to any other lodging. "Highly inexpedient" were the words he used, looking as grave as a judge all the time; for he is awfully proper and decorous, though,

at the same time, he is awfully nice. I can see you raise your eyebrows in astonishment when you read what I am now going to tell you. That frequently during these long summer evenings I have walked with him in Kensington Gardens, and that we have talked for hours and hours together, and that he has never said one word of you. I cannot tell exactly what it is he talks about; I often try to think of it after we have parted, and I am at home again alone, but I never can recollect it exactly; I only know that he talks very cleverly and very charmingly, and I am only required to say a word here and there.

Oh, Madge, it is no use my beating about the bush any longer, and attempting to deceive you; I have read over what I have just written, and I might as well put in so many words what you already know, that I am madly in love with Gerald, and think there is no one like him in the world. Don't think this a sudden fit of frenzy, and that I have gone mad; it has been growing and growing ever so long, ever since we were at Wexeter together, and he used to give me drawing lessons.

Mind, Madge, he does not make love to me—at least, I mean to say, exactly make love; he is far too honourable to attempt to take the slightest advantage of my position, and he has never said anything to me which you might not have heard. I mean, of course, anything so far as honour is concerned; but his manner is so kind and gentle, and he is so patient with my ignorance and my folly; so careful to prevent its ever occurring to me that I am not moving in his sphere, or that there is any difference in our rank in life, and so handsome—you have no idea, Madge, what he is like now—that I cannot help loving him immensely.

I do not know that I should have taken even you into confidence, Madge, if it could have gone on in this way, but I am sufficiently sensible to know that it cannot. The summer evenings are at an end now, and there will be no more long walks, and then all my chances of seeing Gerald, save for a few moments at a time, are over; and then I sometimes think that if I were to give up seeing him it would kill me, and then I know I must give it up, and then I think I should go mad, only I find comfort in the remembrances of your strong, sound sense, and the certainty that you will advise me for the best; and remember, dear, whatever has to be done, and whatever is to be said to Gerald about it, you must say it for me, because I could never—but we

will talk this all over when I come down to see you.

Oh, by the way, you recollect my writing to you some time ago of Gerald telling me about an old lady whom he wished me to call upon, but she was ill at the time. She is always ill, it appears, and as Gerald wished her very much to see me I walked there with him the other evening. She lives in a fashionable part of the town, in a tiny little mite of a house, exquisitely furnished, and looking on to Hyde Park; she has been a handsome woman, and was so beautifully dressed, just in good taste, you know, for an invalid, who is always compelled to lie on a sofa. She tried to be very polite, but she is of the old C-A-T order, looking me up and down, and through and through, and "Miss Pierreponted" me whenever she addressed me. When I rose to go, I almost expected her to ring and order "the young person to be shown out." Gerald looked annoyed, and I rather think the introduction was a failure. He has not said much about it since, only that Mrs. Entwistle (that's her funny old name) was peculiar, and that allowances must be made for her as an invalid, &c.

Now, dearest Madge, write to me at once, and tell me what we shall do about meeting; and don't fret yourself about what I have told you, for it is all perfectly right, and I will be entirely guided by your advice.

Your loving

ROSE.

P.S.—I had almost forgotten to tell you a curious thing which happened yesterday. We have a new clerk at the counter, and it appears he refused to take a message because it was written in cipher; the person delivering it insisted on its being forwarded, and as he refused to go away, higher authority was appealed to, and I was sent for. Directly I set eyes upon the man, who wished the telegram forwarded, I recognised him at once. Don't you recollect, just a short time before the close of the season at Wexeter, I came one morning to fetch you after rehearsal, and, as we walked away from the theatre, we were followed for a long distance by a short stout man, whose hands we noticed were covered with blazing diamond rings, and who kept on dogging our footsteps, to my great amusement? But you were in a tremendous rage about it, and at last you stopped dead, and turning round, looked the man up and down as though you could have killed and eaten him on the spot, and then he, in a far more gentlemanly manner

than we either of us could have given him credit for, raised his hat and went away.

There stood the very man at our counter; I recognised him in an instant; saw the whole scene before me. Of course he didn't recognise, in the superintendent of the telegraph office, the sister and companion of the celebrated actress, Miss M. P. I inquired into the matter, told him that his message could be forwarded, and he retired, taking off his hat to me, exactly as he had taken it off to you on the before-named memorable occasion.

I wonder who he is; he looked very like a member of the profession, or perhaps more in the style of the manager of that American circus which came to one of the towns—I forget which—where you were acting when I was with you. His message was in cipher, and there is therefore nothing in it which led to his identification; it is a funny message, I enclose you a copy of it.

"I enclose you a copy of it," repeated Madge, turning over the paper, "and there is nothing enclosed; that's just like Rose. Ah, what is this?" and she stooped down to pick up a piece of paper lying on the ground at her feet. It was the usual printed form of a telegraph message. Madge noticed that it was headed "copy," that it was filled up in Rose's handwriting, and that it was lengthy, but she read nothing beyond the first two lines, which ran thus:

"D. L. B., London, to Philip Vane, Esq., care of P. Kaulbach, Esq., Hollycombe, Sandown, Isle of Wight."

Madge started, doubting whether she had read aright; she re-read the address carefully, placed the paper in her pocket, and started off at once for the rectory.

She found Mr. Drage at home, and read aloud to him the text of Rose's letter; she did not show him the copy of the telegram, but she repeated exactly the address it contained. There was no need for her to refer to the written document, every word of that address was burning in her memory, as though each had been emblazoned in letters of fire.

"This is, to say the least of it, very lucky," said Mr. Drage, "for I will use that phrase in preference to any more serious one, which might seem to imply especial interposition on our behalf. Have you thought of what you will do now?"

"I have," said Madge. "I will make my way at once to the place where Philip Vane is staying, and confront him. I am

sufficient woman of business to have consulted Bradshaw while waiting for you, and I have already arranged my route; I find that I can go across country to Yeovil, sleep there this evening, and proceed to-morrow to Southampton, whence I can cross to the Isle of Wight."

"May I not accompany you?" said Mr. Drage.

"No," said Madge, "I think it will be better that I should go alone: not that I think either of us need have the smallest fear of what the world might say about such a proceeding, but I am sure that my chance of—well, I suppose I may say, of escaping with my life from my husband, will be greater if he imagines I have acted entirely on my own promptings in this affair."

"The argument you have used is scarcely one which should induce me to give way to you," said Mr. Drage; "however, since you are determined, go, and God speed you! Sir Geoffry will be perfectly prepared to hear you wish for a few days' change; I have taken care of that."

On the second evening after her leaving Wheatcroft, Madge Pierrepont rang the bell of a large and handsome one-storied villa, standing in a lovely garden, and overlooking Sandown Bay. The hall-door was open, and several servants were flitting about, busily engaged removing the dinner. One of these advanced towards her.

"Is Mr. Philip Vane within?"

The servant glanced first at her and then at the fly which had brought her from the hotel, then he was reassured.

"Mr. Vane is staying in the house, ma'am," he replied.

"I wish to speak with him."

"Certainly, ma'am," said the man, showing the way into a small room. "Will you walk into the study. Who shall I say wishes to see Mr. Vane?"

"Say Mrs. Vane, if you please," said Madge, firmly.

END OF BOOK THE SECOND.

A BILL OF THE PLAY.

ARE there, now-a-days, any collectors of playbills? In the catalogues of second-hand booksellers are occasionally to be found such entries as: "Playbills of the Theatre Royal Bath, 1807 to 1812;" or "Hull Theatre Royal—various bills of performances between 1815 and 1850;" or "Covent Garden Theatre—variety of old bills of the last century pasted in a

volume;" yet these evidences of the care and diligence of past collectors would not seem to obtain much appreciation in the present. The old treasures can generally be purchased at a very moderate outlay. Still if scarceness is an element of value, these things should be precious. It is in the nature of such ephemera of the printing press to live their short hour, and disappear with exceeding suddenness. They may be originally issued in hundreds or even in thousands; but once gone they are gone for ever. Relative to such matters there is an energy of destruction that keeps pace with the industry of production. The demands of "waste" must be met: fires must be lighted. So away go the loose papers—sheets and pamphlets of the minute. They have served their turn, and there is an end of them. Hence the difficulty of obtaining, when needed, a copy of a newspaper of old date, or the guide-book or programme of a departed entertainment, or the catalogue of a past auction of books or pictures. It has been noted that, notwithstanding the enormous circulation it enjoyed, the catalogue of our Great Exhibition of a score of years ago is already a somewhat rare volume. Complete sets of the catalogues of the Royal Academy's century of exhibitions are possessed by very few. And of playbills of the English stage from the Restoration down to the present time, although the British Museum can certainly boast a rich collection, yet this is disfigured here and there by gaps and deficiencies which cannot now possibly be supplied.

The playbill is an ancient thing. Mr. Payne Collier states that the practice of printing information as to the time, place, and nature of the performances to be presented by the players was certainly common prior to the year 1563. John Northbrooke, in his treatise against theatrical performers, published about 1579, says: "They use to set up their bills upon posts some certain days before to admonish people to make resort to their theatres." The old plays make frequent reference to this posting of the playbills. Thus in the induction to *A Warning for Fair Women*, 1599, Tragedy whips Comedy from the stage, crying:

'Tis you have kept the theatre so long
Painted in playbills upon every post,
While I am scorned of the multitude.

Taylor, the water poet, in his *Wit and Mirth*, records the story of Field the actor's riding rapidly up Fleet-street, and being stopped by a gentleman with an inquiry as to the

play that was to be played that night. Field, "being angry to be stayed upon so frivolous a demand, answered, that he might see what play was to be played upon every post. 'I cry you mercy,' said the gentleman. 'I took you for a post, you rode so fast.'"

It is strange to find that the right of printing playbills was originally monopolised by the Stationers' Company. At a later period, however, the privilege was assumed and exercised by the crown. In 1620, James the First granted a patent to Roger Wood and Thomas Symcocke for the sole printing, among other things, of "all bills for plays, pastimes, shewes, challenges, prizes, or sportes whatsoever." It was not until after the Restoration that the playbills contained a list of the dramatis personæ, or of the names of the actors. But it had been usual, apparently, with the title of the drama, to supply the name of its author and its description as a tragedy or comedy. Shirley, in the prologue to his Cardinal, apologises for calling it only a "play" in the bill:

Think what you please, we call it but a "play:"
Whether the comic muse, or lady's love,
Romance or direful tragedy it prove,
The bill determines not.

From a later passage in the same prologue Mr. Collier judges that the titles of tragedies were usually printed, for the sake of distinction, in red ink:

—and you would be
Persuaded I would have't a comedy
For all the purple in the name.

There is probably no playbill extant of an earlier date than 1663. About this time, in the case of a new play, it was usual to state in the bill that it had been "never acted before."

In the earliest days of the stage, before the invention of printing, the announcement that theatrical performances were about to be exhibited was made by sound of trumpet, much after the manner of modern strollers and showmen at fairs and street-corners. Indeed, long after playbills had become common, this musical advertisement was still requisite for the due information of the unlettered patrons of the stage. In certain towns the musicians were long looked upon as the indispensable heralds of the actors. Tate Wilkinson, writing in 1790, records that a custom obtained at Norwich, "and if abolished it has not been many years," of proclaiming in every street with drum and trumpet the performances to be presented at the theatre in the evening. A like practice also prevailed at Grantham. To the

Lincolnshire company of players, however, this musical preface to their efforts seemed objectionable and derogatory, and they determined, on one of their visits to the town, to dispense with the old-established sounds. But the reform resulted in empty benches. Thereupon the "revered, well-remembered, and beloved Marquis of Granby" sent for the manager of the troop; and thus addressed him: "Mr. Manager, I like a play. I like a player, and I shall be glad to serve you. But, my good friend, why are you all so offended at and averse to the noble sound of a drum? I like it, and all the inhabitants like it. Put my name on your playbill, provided you drum, but not otherwise. Try the effect on to-morrow night; if then you are as thinly attended as you have lately been, shut up your playhouse at once; but if it succeeds drum away!" The players withdrew their opposition and followed the counsels of the marquis. The musical prelude was again heard in the streets of Grantham, and crowded houses were obtained. The company enjoyed a prosperous season, and left the town in great credit. "And I am told," adds Wilkinson, "the custom is continued at Grantham to this day."

An early instance of the explanatory address, signed by the dramatist or manager, which so frequently accompanies the modern playbill, is to be found in the fly-sheet issued by Dryden in 1665. The poet thought it expedient in this way to inform the audience that his tragedy of the Indian Emperor was to be regarded as a sequel to a former work, the Indian Queen, which he had written in conjunction with his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Howard. The handbill excited some amusement, by reason of its novelty, for in itself it was but a simple and useful intimation. In ridicule of this proceeding, Bayes, the hero of the Duke of Buckingham's burlesque, the Rehearsal, is made to say: "I have printed above a hundred sheets of paper to insinuate the plot into the boxes."

Chetwood, who had been twenty years prompter at Drury Lane, and published a History of the Stage in 1749, describes a difficulty that had arisen in regard to printing the playbills. Of old the lists of characters had been set forth according to the books of the plays, without regard to the merits of the performers. "As, for example, in Macbeth, Duncan, King of Scotland, appeared first in the bill, though acted by an insignificant person, and so every other actor appeared according to his dramatic dignity, all of the same sized

letter. But latterly, I can assure my readers, I have found it a difficult task to please some ladies as well as gentlemen, because I could not find letters large enough to please them; and some were so fond of elbow room that they would have shoved everybody out but themselves, as if one person was to do all, and have the merit of all, like generals of an army." Garrick seems to have been the first actor honoured by capital letters of extra size in the playbills. The Connoisseur, in 1754, says: "The writer of the playbills deals out his capitals in so just a proportion that you may tell the salary of each actor by the size of the letter in which his name is printed. When the present manager of Drury Lane first came on the stage a new set of types, two inches long, were cast on purpose to do honour to his extraordinary merit." These distinctions in the matter of printing occasioned endless jealousies among the actors. Macklin made it an express charge against his manager, Sheridan, the actor, that he was accustomed to print his own name in larger type than was permitted the other performers. Kean threatened to throw up his engagement at Drury Lane on account of his name having been printed in capitals of a smaller size than usual. His engagement of 1818 contained a condition, "and also that his name shall be continued in the bills of performance in the same manner as it is at present," viz., large letters. On the other hand, Dowton, the comedian, greatly objected to having his name thus particularised, and expostulated with Elliston, his manager, on the subject. "I am sorry you have done this," he wrote. "You know well what I mean. This cursed quackery. These big letters. There is a want of respectability about it, or rather a notoriety, which gives one the feeling of an absconded felon, against whom a hue and cry is made public. Or if there be really any advantage in it, why should I, or any single individual, take it over the rest of our brethren? But it has a nasty disreputable look, and I have fancied the whole day the finger of the town pointed at me, as much as to say, 'That is he! Now for the re-

ARE there, is this expedient to the police playbills? In those who have a taste for it, hand booksellers.

found such entries as: at once when an Theatre Royal Bath, 1864 over to Dub-
"Hull Theatre Royal—vaof great acquire-
formances between 1815 the animal at a
"Covent Garden Theatre—, limited num-
bills of the last century

ber of nights at his theatre. Mossop's name in the playbill was always in a type nearly two inches long, the rest of the performers' names being in very small letters. But to the monkey were devoted capitals of equal size to Mossop's; so that, greatly to the amusement of the public, on the playbills pasted about the town, nothing could be distinguished but the words, MOSSOP, MONKEY. Under John Kemble's management, "for his greater ease and the quiet of the theatre," letters of unreasonable size were abandoned, and the playbills were printed after an amended and more modest pattern.

With the rise and growth of the press came the expediency of advertising the performances of the theatres in the columns of the newspapers. To the modern manager advertisements are a very formidable expense. The methods he is compelled to resort to in order to bring his plays and players well under the notice of the public, involve a serious charge upon his receipts. But of old the case was precisely the reverse. The theatres were strong, the newspapers were weak. So far from the manager paying money for the insertion of his advertisements in the journals, he absolutely received profits on this account. The press then suffered under severe restrictions, and was most jealously regarded by the governing powers; leading articles were as yet unknown; the printing of parliamentary debates was strictly prohibited; foreign intelligence was scarcely obtainable; of home news there was little stirring that could with safety be promulgated. So that the proceedings of the theatres became of real importance to the newspaper proprietor, and it was worth his while to pay considerable sums for early information in this respect. Moreover, in those days, not merely by reason of its own merits, but because of the absence of competing attractions and other sources of entertainment, the stage was much more than at present an object of general regard. In Andrews's History of British Journals it is recorded, on the authority of the ledger of Henry Woodfall, the publisher of the Public Advertiser: "The theatres are a great expense to the papers. Amongst the items of payment are, playhouses one hundred pounds. Drury Lane advertisements, sixty-four pounds eight shillings and sixpence, Covent Garden, ditto, sixty-six pounds eleven shillings. The papers paid two hundred pounds a year to each theatre for the accounts of new plays, and

would reward the messenger with a shilling or half a crown who brought them the first copy of a playbill." In 1721, the following announcement appeared in the *Daily Post*: "The managers of Drury Lane think it proper to give notice that advertisements of their plays, by their authority, are published only in this paper and the *Daily Courant*, and that the publishers of all other papers who insert advertisements of the same plays, can do it only by some surreptitious intelligence or hearsay, which frequently leads them to commit gross errors, as, mentioning one play for another, falsely representing the parts, &c., to the misinformation of the town, and the great detriment of the said theatre." And the *Public Advertiser* of January the 1st, 1765, contains a notice: "To prevent any mistake in future in advertising the plays and entertainments of Drury Lane Theatre, the managers think it proper to declare that the playbills are inserted by their direction in this paper only." It is clear that the science of advertising was but dimly understood at this date. Even the shopkeepers then paid for the privilege of exhibiting bills in their windows, whereas now they require to be rewarded for all exertions of this kind, by, at any rate, free admissions to the entertainments advertised, if not by a specific payment of money. The exact date when the managers began to pay instead of receive on the score of their advertisements, is hardly to be ascertained. Geneste, in his laborious *History of the Stage*, says obscurely of the year 1745: "At this time the plays were advertised at three shillings and sixpence each night or advertisement in the *General Advertiser*." It may be that the adverse systems went on together for some time. The managers may have paid certain journals for the regular insertion of advertisements, and received payment from less favoured or less influential newspapers for theatrical news or information.

One of Charles Lamb's most pleasant papers arose from "the casual sight of an old playbill which I picked up the other day; I know not by what chance it was preserved so long." It was but two-and-thirty years old, however, and presented the cast of parts in *Twelfth Night* at Old Drury Lane Theatre, destroyed by fire in 1809. Lamb's delight in the stage needs not to be again referred to. "There is something very touching in these old remembrances," he writes. "They make

us think how we once used to read a playbill, not as now peradventure singling out a favourite performer and casting a negligent eye over the rest; but spelling out every name down to the very mutes and servants of the scene; when it was a matter of no small moment to us whether Whitfield or Packer took the part of Fabian; when Benson, and Burton, and Phillimore—names of small account—had an importance beyond what we can be content to attribute now to the time's best actors." The fond industry with which a youthful devotee of the theatre studies the playbills could hardly be more happily indicated than in this extract.

Mention of Old Drury Lane and its burning bring us naturally to the admirable "story of the flying playbill," contained in the parody of Crabbe, perhaps the most perfect specimen in that unique collection of parodies, *Rejected Addresses*. The verses by the pseudo-Crabbe include the following lines:

Perchance while pit and gallery cry "Hats off!"
And awed consumption checks his chided cough,
Some giggling daughter of the Queen of Love
Drops, reft of pin, her playbill from above;
Like Icarus, while laughing galleries clap,
Soars, ducks, and dives in air the printed scrap;
But, wiser far than he, combustion fears;
And, as it flies, eludes the chandeliers;
Till, sinking gradual, with repeated twirl,
It settles, curling, on a fiddler's curl,
Who from his powdered pate the intruder strikes,
And, for mere malice, sticks it on the spikes.

"The story of the flying playbill," says the mock-preface, "is calculated to expose a practice, much too common, of pinning playbills to the cushions insecurely, and frequently, I fear, not pinning them at all. If these lines save one playbill only from the fate I have recorded, I shall not deem my labour ill employed."

Modern playbills may be described as of two classes, in-door and out-of-door. The latter are known also as "posters," and may thus manifest their connexion with the early method of "setting up playbills upon posts." Shakespeare's audiences were not supplied each with handbills as our present playgoers are; such of them as could read were probably content to derive all the information they needed from the notices affixed to the doors of the theatre, or otherwise publicly exhibited. Of late years the venders of playbills who were wont urgently to pursue every vehicle that seemed to them bound to the theatre, in the hope of disposing of their wares, have greatly diminished in numbers, if they have not wholly disappeared. Many managers have

forbidden altogether the sale of bills outside the doors of their establishments. The in-door programmes are again divided into two kinds. To the lower priced portions of the houses an inferior bill is devoted; a folio sheet of thin paper heavily laden and strongly odorous with printers' ink. Visitors to the more expensive seats are now supplied with a scented bill of octavo size, which is generally, in addition, the means of advertising the goods and inventions of an individual perfumer. Attempts to follow Parisian example, and to make the playbill at once a vehicle for general advertisements and a source of amusing information upon theatrical subjects, have been ventured here occasionally, but without decided success. From time to time papers started with this object, under such titles as the Opera Glass, the Curtain, the Drop Scene, &c., have appeared, but they have failed to secure a sufficiency of patronage. The playgoer's openness to receive impressions or information of any kind by way of employment during the intervals of representation, have not been unperceived by the advertiser, however, and now and then, as a result, a monstrosity called an "advertising curtain," has disfigured the stage. Some new development of the playbill in this direction may be in store for us in the future. The difficulty lies, perhaps, in the gilding of the pill. Advertisements by themselves are not very attractive reading, and a mixed audience cannot safely be credited with a ruling appetite merely for dramatic intelligence.

A TRYST.

HER red-gold locks by broad blue ribbons bound,
Fell o'er her graceful shoulders—her low voice
Was as the south wind mid the summer leaves,
Making melodious music: Love's bright spell
Lay in the tangled mazes of her hair,
Lurked in her sunny eyes: her red lips held
Such living pearls, as from the Indian deep
Ne'er diver brought—a costly merchandise,
To gem a monarch's crown.

Finger-on-lip,
Dewy-eyed eve crept onward: and the star,
The silver spark, that glitters in the west,
Even mid the roseate cloud-waves that enshroud
The parting sun-god's golden chariot wheels,
Rose o'er the belt of pines, whose sable fronds
Showed black and plumed, 'neath the mellow light
Of the young crescent-orb.

And then a maid,
Brushing the glittering dew-drops with her feet
From off the lawn, stole to the withered oak,
That skirts the garden-fences: Aureola!
There didst thou stand, with quickly-beating heart,
Thy colour heightened, though no eye to see,
Waiting for him—who came not. Ah, ah me!
Sweetling! too oft the thistle-down bath weight
Compared with man's false oaths.

Slowly and sad,
Homeward again she turned: The white owl wailed,

The nightingale, upon the lilac-bush,
Sang "Love, O buried Love!" and o'er the path,
The showering rose-leaves, to Aureola,
Seemed omens of her "fate." Sudden she paused:
Then with a backward impulse, sought again
The withered trysting-tree: two youthful loves
Hung on that precious moment—and two lives!

What is yon shadow on the gravelled path?
What is yon figure, leaning 'gainst the oak?
Back to the maiden's cheek the life-blood flows.
Had she gone homewards, she had missed her "fate;"
What happy impulse moved her to return?
Love, 'twas thine inspiration—he is here!

A PENNY READING AT MOPETOWN.

MOPETOWN—and some perverse fate seems to thrust me on the place more frequently every year—after many visits, seems to me to be the very ignis fatuus of the entertainers. They know that no one in the place wants to be entertained, still less to pay for being entertained; yet some horrid infatuation seems to draw them there, offering their dismal buzzings, and invariably burning their wings. Suddenly the amateurs of the place caught the mania. Why should not something be done to amuse the Mopetownians? Was it not churlish, keeping all these delightful gifts to themselves? When a few words will rescue misery out of its distress, as Mr. Sterne says of the cab, the man that could grudge them must be a mean curmudgeon indeed. It was some such noble and unselfish principle that led to the Mopetown Penny Readings. It was all a spectacle of the purest charity and self-sacrifice, and the furnishers of the show devoted themselves for the good of the famished and semi-barbarous natives of the place.

To my surprise I found that the admission charges to these so-called Penny Readings were two shillings, one shilling, sixpence, threepence; while the "title-admission," as it might be called, was too contemptible to be quoted at all in the bills.

"And do you mean to tell me," I said, indignantly, to a sort of crab-faced man who sat beside me, "that after calling them Penny Readings, pretending to have a graduated scale of charges for admission——"

"See here," he said, earnestly, "if you mean the admission to these 'ere preserved seats——"

"Reserved!" I mildly uttered.

"Reserved, preserved, or *deserved*, they're seats all the time, I suppose? If the admission to these here was a farthing apiece, they'd only beat up a couple, and they'd be children. The whole thing's gra-

tootous. They go out and ram their tickets into everybody's hands; they sweep the streets and lanes. The parson touts among all his folk, the doctor does the same, and so does the attorney. So do all the old women of the parish."

Greatly astonished at these revelations, I asked, "But *why* should they do this? What is the object?"

"It's a mere 'Vanity-shop,' that's the whole truth. Every man, woman, and girl among 'em is panting to show off. They'd pay a mob in the street to stop and listen to 'em. If they could only get the attention given to a Punch and Judy show, they'd be happy: but they can't. *That's* a higher order of thing. Here they come! That's Cleaver, the parson's son, who thinks he's got a turn for speeching, and got the whole thing up. Oh! a regular Vanity-shop!"

Mr. Horace Cleaver, I saw from my bill, was "hon. sec.," a smiling, fussy gentleman, who was received with great applause.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "there is one matter in connexion with the Readin's which I wish to bring before your notice. After much deliberation we have determined to conclude the series a little abruptly; and I have now to announce that there will be *only six more*. The reason for this step has nothing to do with want of support, as was insinuated lately in a certain quarter." (Crab-face nudged me and whispered, "Th' Argus, you know.") "That I brand simply as a CALUMNY!" (Applause.) "On this very night we have had to turn away people from the doors. The truth is, that in about five weeks we shall lose our valued friend who has contributed so much to your amusement, Mr. Hornblower." (All faces turned here, as if the word of command "Eyes left!" had been given, to a corner of the room.) "Business calls Mr. Hornblower to London. Then, again, Miss Weekes, to whose light fingers we are so much indebted, has to leave." (My neighbour repeated to me, with a chuckle, "D'ye hear, light-fingered, is she? *That's* a funny sort of compliment.") "However," said Mr. Cleaver, "having stated so much, I have only to add that Miss Weekes will now perform a solo on the 'pianerfort.'"

Mr. Cleaver bowed and retired, then returned, leading out, in rather a hurried and flurried manner, Miss Weekes—a very agitated young virgin—who gave us an abrupt curtsy, and then, squeezing herself

in between the stool and the instrument, scrambled off into the late M. Thalberg's fantasia in Norma. That master, it is acknowledged, generally wrote on rather difficult lines, and Miss Weekes was not equal to the occasion. The young lady's hands sprawled about, leaped, plunged, invariably falling short of the correct note, making out, indeed, something that had a rude outline of the March in Norma, but could not bear investigation for a moment as finished or artistic playing. It was all a musical muddle; but at Mopetown, I understand, we were never very exacting, and if the normal sounds of the instrument were fairly produced, it was considered unreasonable to ask more. When the performance was over, Miss Weekes fled away in a frightened fawn-like manner, disregarding Mr. Cleaver's proffered cavaliership.

I now found that Mr. Brook Derrick would read for us the Execution of Montrose, which would be, as a lady behind me said, "a treat." This, of course, referred to the subject matter, whose excellence was ascertained, but the interpretation was, of course, matter of speculation. Suddenly a gloomy and sepulchral gentleman strode out slowly, a kind of stage volume in his hand. He had black hair and a yellow skin, and I noticed took a good deal of time in placing his book after he got it open at the right place, smoothing it in a reflective way, while his eyes roamed gloomily over the audience. I have seen this at other readings, and it is considered the distinguishing "note" of an experienced performer. After the smoothing, going on for some time, had produced (as was intended) a kind of nervous stillness, Mr. Derrick gave out slowly and undertakerly, "The Execution of Mun-tearose!" He had a scornful fashion about his interpretation; never looking at us, always at a remote cornice or ventilator, at which he flashed his eye and defied the bloodthirsty mob. He allowed his eye to kindle as he crouched down, and scowled, and curled his lip, and snarled, and grew husky. He at last cut off the hero's head, looked at us all round with ineffable disgust, closed his volume slowly, and stalked out, bearing it with him. Not one of us liked him: and I think we should have had no objection to have seen him laid personally on the block in lieu of the unhappy Scotch nobleman.

Miss Speedy was announced as the next candidate for our approbation, who was set down to sing a coquettish ballad entitled

Why don't He ask Me? She was a buxom, apparently shy, but in reality forward young person: florid, healthy, and with a mouth that was always hovering on the edge of a grin. She kept her music before her like a tea-tray; her sister was at the instrument, and was I could see unnerved by agitation. The strain referred to a gentleman supposed to be a candidate for the affections of the singer. She described him as a "Robin" who

Comes every day
With something to say,
Which to guess, would not task me,
Then why—
(*Flourish of the piano from the sister.*)
Then why—

(*Flourish ditto.*)

Then why, why don't he ask me?

This was delivered with coyness—a wish to hide her head behind the music, an arch shyness. We of course felt that had we been in the gentleman's position, we should not have hung back in that fashion. Still I think she was more or less "brazen," with a tendency to the more. My neighbour said she "would follow a camp," but this was a coarse reflection on the young lady's character.

Next, Mr. Cleaver came out to say that Mr. Siddons Green had kindly consented to recite for us "Edgar Allan Poe's piece of word-painting, the Bells." There was much applause. Siddons Green, I heard from behind, was a gentleman who either had been on the stage, was on the stage, or was going on the stage, I could not make out which distinctly. Another lady whispered something about "going into the Church," and seemed to perceive no discrepancy between the callings. To my surprise Mr. Siddons Green had nothing of the vault about him; and had indeed rather the young curate air—a tenderness and a plaintiveness. His reading of Mr. Poe's bit of "word-painting" was highly curious. It will be remembered that the piece describes various descriptions of bells with singular power, the first strophe, I think, being devoted to the wedding bells. We listened with pleasure to the melodious lines—

Hear the music of the bells,
Wedding bells,
How they, &c.

He gave the nuptial tone tenderly and sweetly, with a kind of conjugal grace, and when the burden came, he chimed it out:

Bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells, bells,

and began to peal them as if he were a bell-ringer himself. His voice fell into a sing-

song key. Some few tittered behind, but we were all more astonished than amused. The effect was odd. But at the next verse, which dealt with funeral bells, Siddons Green became mortuary, and dead-cart-like. He suddenly turned into a ghoul, and when it came to the burden we seemed to hear the chimes of an adjoining tower:

To the pealing of the bells,
Bee-yulls, beeyulls,
Boolls, boolls, bulls, bulls, balls,
Boles, BOWLES, BOWLES!

As this extraordinary mimetic representation set in, some Mopetownians began to look wonderingly at each other, then to smile, and at last a wave of tittering began to spread away even to the last benches. Siddons Green looked up with scornful surprise—there are low persons in every audience—and then addressed himself to the final stanza, where I think a house is described as being on fire, and the bells ring violently for the firemen. He described it all vividly, "how they clang, how they bang!" (or in words to that effect) until he came to the burden again, "to the ringing and the swinging" of the

Bells, bells, bells, bells, bells,
Beeyells, beeyells, beeyells,
Bells, bells, bells, &c.

At this effort of campanology we could restrain ourselves no longer, and roared and roared again in hysterical merriment. It was too funny, and the ringer, glaring furiously, closed his book vehemently and walked away indignantly.

When we had recovered from our hilarity, Mr. Cleaver, who never omitted the ceremony of announcement, though we had all bills in our hands, came out to say that "Miss Puxley would now sing the Irish song, Patrick, Asthore." This announcement produced great applause. But looking round, I was struck by the motionless hands and soured faces of a whole family who were sitting behind. There was present on each and all a sort of grim consternation, for which so simple an announcement could scarcely be accountable. It flashed upon me in a second that these must be representatives of the other coquettish female delineator who had put the question, "Why don't he ask me?" Here was an opposition arch creature, and who going to be musically coy and forward alternatively in reference to "Patrick, asthore." The surmise proved to be an exceedingly sagacious one, for there emerged a very bouncing young lady with dark eyes, which she dropped shyly and slyly, and then caused to range boldly over the whole room. I

heard snortings and rustlings of contempt behind me, with the word "brazen" borne to my ears distinctly, accompaniments which increased as the lady would now decline the amorous advances of "Pathrick, asthore," now encourage them, now appear ready to sink with confusion, as with the successful effrontery of his countrymen, the lover pushed his advantages. Now she began to pout, now to push him away with a musical indignation which we could see was only simulated. The party behind showed how disgusted they were. "Without shame," were the words used. But now a change came o'er her face; she grew pensive:

O mother I'll cry,
O mother I'll die,
If Pathrick, asthore,
Should come here no more!

But there was no need of this protest, for in came Paddy himself, more forward and unpolite than ever. And she exclaimed at the last time of the recurring burden:

"Go away, ah do,
I begin to hate you."
But the impudent fellow,
As though he'd grown mellow,
Said "Here's hit or miss,"
And gave me—well *this*!
Provoking Paddy, asthore!

So arch was the pantomime with which the forward Paddy's compliment was conveyed that it completely took the audience by storm, all save the hostile detachment immediately behind, whose snortings and champings of impatience, disgust, and even anger, were loud enough for a whole squadron of cavalry. "Minx!" "Such an exhibition!" "Brazen creature!" "Well, I never!" were some of the depreciatory remarks I again heard, which convinced me that in this line of business this young lady bore away all suffrages, and had completely extinguished her rival. I trembled when I thought of the competition at the next reading, when the sense of competition would probably lead the first young lady into a display of pantomimic love-making that would scandalise the decorous.

The next postulant was the famous Mr. Hornblower, whom I heard spoken of with jocular interest as "Jack." He was a tall, heavy young man, who appeared with a familiar smile on his face, as though he well knew his power over all hearts, a confidence which was, indeed, presently justified, as, with a simple glance of humour, while the symphony was playing, he threw us all into convulsions of laughter. This power contrasted forcibly with the rather

tentative efforts of his companions, who were timorous and insecure as to the result of their efforts: while he, on the contrary, had a calm and undisturbed command over his resources, and the temper of his audience, which must have been the envy of the others. Nor did his performance belie this promise. He sang a melody descriptive of the career of "a **VERY** big man," everything about this gentleman being "very big;" and when he alluded to this person's marriage with "a very big wife," the ceiling of the Mopetown Rooms rang again and again with screams of convulsive laughter, which I doubt if the late Mr. Liston, or the present Mr. Toole, ever succeeded in rivalling. Between the verses, as he walked round on his toes, and hitched up his shoulders, some of the young ladies grew hysterical in their enjoyment, and tears flowed from the eyes of stout gentlemen. But curious to say, I observed precisely the same phenomenon as I had done in the case of the soi-disant flame of "Pathrick, asthore," namely, a family who preserved an almost cataleptic rigidity at the exertions of the humorist. In vain he postured and grimaced, they looked on with a stony attention. The son of that house, for so I conjectured him to be, whispered now and again to his mother, so I conjectured her to be, and from his face I could have sworn he was saying, "Miserable exhibition! How a man could so degrade himself! A positive buffoon!" I later gathered there was another artist in the same line, who answered the description of this young man.

But I must not linger too long, for the night is wearing on apace. The most interesting feature of the evening, as I should have supposed, was to conclude the performance. The "popular secretary," as I knew the Mopetown prints were certain to style him, had kept a *bonne bouche* for these last nights of the series, a little reading of his own. He did not (I was sure) set up to have the broad humour of his other friends; nor had any pretension to be one of your public performers. But still, in a small way, he had a "quiet fun" of his own; as, indeed, those who enjoyed his friendship in the domestic privacy could testify. Mr. Cleaver had very little voice, and gave us the well-known Trial in *Pickwick*. His voice was so small and husky, that after about a quarter of an hour's progress, the genuine penny folk in the distance began to grow impatient, and a navvy who had strayed in, perhaps taking it for

some inverted shape of "free and easy," called out with profane irreverence, "Speak oop, mon!" The disrespect of this address made a spasm pass over the form of the reader, while a shiver, attended with almost regimental turning of heads, affected the audience. The navvy, leaning on his elbows, only grinned. Mr. Cleaver could treat such an interruption with contempt; and as this did not help to raise his voice, the example of the navvy became presently contagious, and demoralised the people about him, who began to make a tramping noise with their heels, which entertained them more than the reading itself. Mr. Cleaver turned very red; he was just coming to Sam Weller's examination, where, as the friends of domestic privacy assured him, he was matchless. He said, in a trembling voice:

"I think this interruption very improper and uncalled for, after all the trouble I have taken. This is a reading which—*which—*—"

A voice, the owner of which has never been known to this hour—though it is suspected he was hired to interrupt—here finished the sentence, "*which ain't worth listening to.*"

A ghastly silence followed. Mr. Cleaver was regarded with a fetish-like worship. He was white with rage at the indecent interruption. He could only murmur something about "sending for the constable." I am told the subject furnished matter of conversation for days after I had quitted Mopetown.

Such was the Mopetown Reading at which I had the honour to assist. Readers who will search their memories will surely find that it seems familiar, and will stir up memories of other similar entertainments. There is a strong family likeness in all Penny Readings.

WASTED PRESENTIMENTS.

EVERYBODY likes a good ghost story; and still more popular, perhaps, are those quasi-supernatural histories which treat of presentiments realised, of dreams fulfilled, of words lightly spoken, but carried out in a manner that the speaker little expected. A list of such stories is at everybody's fingers' ends; but it has been my lot to meet with several instances of another class of stories, much less frequently commented on, but to my mind even more curious; cases, I mean, in which a peculiar warning has

been—all but, and yet not quite—borne out by subsequent events; so that the intimation could not be passed over as altogether trivial, and yet missed its mark. Several such occurrences have been related to me by witnesses in whose testimony I have full confidence, and I will proceed to give them without further preface.

Doctor J., a retired physician in delicate health, resided, some years ago, in one of the principal towns in the West of England. He was one night seized suddenly with violent illness, and within an hour or two was pronounced to be in a hopeless state. Doctor J. being a Roman Catholic, the Reverend Doctor V., a priest of that communion, was sent for to administer the last rites of religion; and, soon finding that his presence could be of no further use to the unconscious sufferer, he bethought himself how he could best procure female companionship for the poor wife, who was quite stunned by the sudden blow. With this intention, he hastened, in the early morning, to the house of an excellent elderly lady, a pious member of his congregation, and a friend of Mrs. J. The lady had not yet left her room, and he simply sent up word that he wished to speak to her. In a few moments she came hurrying into the room, with every appearance of agitation, and, before he could explain his sad errand, she seized his hand, breathlessly exclaiming: "Oh, Doctor V., how thankful I am to see you! I have had the most frightful, vivid dream about Doctor and Mrs. J.!" Doctor V. might well start, but she hurried on. "I dreamed that I went to call at their house, and that Mrs. J. came down to meet me in a widow's cap, with her face all swollen with tears, and she said to me: 'Oh! Mrs. M., my dear husband is just dead; and he desired me to say that you will be the next.'" "And how did you tell her?" Doctor V.'s auditors were won't to ask at this part of the narration; to which the reverend gentleman invariably answered, "I dare say it was very cowardly, and I dare say it was very foolish; but I did not tell her at all: I bolted!"

So far the story is like many another tale of the marvellous, but the usual sequel is wanting; for though Doctor J. died, Mrs. M. lived on for many years; and certainly was not "the next," unless in some mysterious sense confined to the world of spirits.

In the early days of our New Zealand colony, Mr. P., a young son of an English peer, settled there with his family. Having hurt his arm, he was advised to try rest and change of air, and accordingly he set out for a trip to the other island, leaving his young wife, whose numerous and constantly increasing nursery duties kept her at home. The time fixed for his return was drawing near, when Mrs. P. was one night awakened by a scream from her eldest child, a little girl four or five years old, who was sleeping in the same bed with her mother. The child had awakened suddenly in a paroxysm of terror, and for some time no soothings were of any avail: all she would do was to point persistently to one corner of the room, while she sobbed out, "Oh! poor papa! poor papa! all dripping with water! all dripping with water!" Of course she was first petted and then laughed at, scolded for a silly little girl, and assured that papa could not possibly have been there; but when Mrs. P. reflected that her husband was probably at that moment on the sea, it is not to be wondered at that she felt her heart grow sick with anxiety. A few days later, as she and her children were sitting down to their breakfast, she saw one of their few neighbours riding up to the door. That he should have come away from his home in the busy morning hours betokened something unusual, and no sooner had she looked in his face than she exclaimed: "Tell me at once, my husband is drowned!" "How did you know?" he responded, thus confirming her fears; and he handed to her a copy of a local newspaper, in which she read that the steamer by which her husband had intended to return, had foundered at sea. The date tallied with her child's dream, and that circumstance seemed to her conclusive; so that when her friend tried to point out to her that there was no proof of her husband's death, she only answered that she had received a fearful warning, and gave herself up to her sorrow. At the end of a few days, Mr. P. quietly walked in, and was a good deal astonished at the agony of almost terrified joy with which his arrival was greeted. It was by the merest chance that he had not been in the lost vessel; he had taken his passage, and had actually gone on board, when he was struck with the extreme lowness of the bulwarks, and thought that, should there be bad weather, he, with his still helpless arm, might be in some danger of being washed

overboard. He therefore returned to the shore, and arranged to come by the next ship instead. So there the story ends, except that we will hope no time was lost in administering a dose of physic to the troublesome little dreamer.

The next story, perhaps, ought hardly to be placed in the same category with the others, since it is possible that the warning may have prevented its own fulfilment.

My great-grandmother was an active Lady Bountiful to a very rustic country population, over whose affairs, temporal and spiritual, she exercised a benevolent, if slightly tyrannical, sway. Among her most frequent pensioners was Soft Billy, as he was called, a poor, half-witted lad, generally quite harmless, but subject to occasional fits of temper, in which he was hard to deal with. One night she dreamed that she was walking along a lane in the neighbourhood, when, from a gap in the hedge, Soft Billy suddenly jumped down into the path before her, brandishing a reaping-hook. His flaming eyes and distorted face showed that his "dark hour" was upon him, and in another second he had flown at her, his fingers were gripping her throat with deadly strength, the steel flashed before her eyes, the very bitterness of death was rushing over her, and she awoke; awoke quivering all over, the cold perspiration standing on her forehead, and her heart beating to suffocation. It was long before she could force herself to meet Soft Billy, even in the presence of others, and for months she avoided the lane which she had traversed in her dream. At last, some sudden case of distress in the village called for her presence, some sick child was to be physicked, or some wife-beating husband to be brought to book, and my great-grandmother set forth, never recollecting, till she had gone some distance, that she must inevitably pass through the dreaded lane. On she went, laughing at her own fears, till suddenly she saw before her the very gap which had appeared in her dream, and which she had never noticed before, and, at that moment, from that very gap, down jumped Soft Billy, and in his hand he brandished a reaping-hook. The dream, in all its horrors, seemed on the verge of fulfilment; but my great-grandmother was a strong-minded woman, and, though her heart was throbbing with terror, she neither fainted nor screamed; she walked straight up to the idiot, and gave him a kindly greeting. "I am glad

to see you, Billy; I am walking to the end of the lane, and now you shall take care of me." The lad, highly flattered, was meek and amiable in a moment, and they walked the rest of the way together, she keeping up an incessant chatter in her most cheery tones, though her heart was doubtless beating at every swing of the ungainly figure, and every flourish of the deadly weapon in the poor, purposeless fingers. At the cottage door she thanked him, and wished him good-bye; and it will readily be believed that she procured another escort for her walk home.

Now for my last story, which I had from the lips of a venerable old Presbyterian minister, the last man to indulge his imagination.

He was in the habit of going every Sunday afternoon to conduct the worship at a little village on the coast of Scotland. One Saturday night he dreamed a vivid dream. He saw the village, and the bay, the waves tossing and beating in a storm, and he saw a pleasure-boat upset, and dashed to pieces against the rocks. Two men were buffeting with the water, fighting for their lives; one a fair, slight youth, the other a middle-aged sailor. As the dreamer looked, he saw them both clutch at, and cling to, a floating spar; it swayed and sank under the double weight, and, while the thought passed through his mind, "it can never support them both," he saw the sailor deliberately raise his fist and strike his companion a blow which stunned him. The young man loosed his hold, and, as he sank into the sea, the sleeper awoke. A few Sundays afterwards he was greeted with the news that a pleasure-boat had been upset, that the body of a young English traveller had been washed on shore, and that an elderly seaman was the only survivor. The man was a good deal injured, and was in bed at a public-house, to which the corpse of the poor young traveller had also been conveyed. The minister at once begged to be taken thither, and so strongly was he impressed with the conviction that his dream had had a literal fulfilment, that he entered the room of the sick man with the fullest intention of taxing him with murder. But when he approached the bed he saw a face totally unlike the one which had haunted his sleep, and every feature of which was vividly impressed on his memory. His visit to the poor dead youth had a like result.

These stories are actual facts, for the

truth of which I can vouch. I will leave all speculations on the subject to those who read them.

GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S NARRATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THAT STATE OF LIFE," &c.

IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VIII.

A WEEK and then a fortnight passed, without any other letter from Assunta. Mr. Walbrooke had written twice, in a calm and forbearing manner considering the provocations he received, and had invited Harry to the Grange; but this had only elicited a flat refusal. The poor fellow was now under the impression that his letter to Assunta had never been forwarded, but destroyed by his uncle, and he tried in vain, through various channels, to learn her address. It was clear to me that she herself had taken every precaution to prevent his tracing her; but he would not see it in this light. I then wrote to her myself, begging her to let me have a line—if she had bound herself by any promise not to write again to Harry—to say if she had received his letter. This I thought it best to enclose to Mr. Walbrooke (who knew of my correspondence with Assunta), begging him to forward it to Miss Fleming. I received a few lines from him, replying that he had done as I requested, feeling sure that I had Harry's interests too much at heart to plead for this insane boy with the young lady, who, having as much good sense as right feeling, had resolved to break off all communication with him. And, in the course of another week, I heard from Assunta herself. The note was without date; short and sad enough, though there was a very evident effort to make it appear otherwise. She had received Harry's letter. She could not write to him; perhaps it was better that she should not write to any one much just at present. She grieved to hear from Mr. Walbrooke that Harry refused to go to the Grange. The thing that would make her happiest now was to know of a complete reconciliation between him and his uncle. As to his entering the wine trade, perhaps she had no longer any right to express an opinion, or offer her advice, but she could not help begging him to pause before he took a step which she dreaded might prove prejudicial to him in all ways. She was very busy, and constant occupation was, no doubt, the best thing for her. She hoped that Harry would not try and track her to her present home, as it would only distress her to no purpose.

I read this, as it was plainly meant I should, to him whom it chiefly concerned. The only effect it produced was to inflame him yet further against his uncle. The poor boy alternated now between fits of profound depression and storms of passion, which, while they lasted, rendered him absolutely ungovernable. And yet, to my surprise, I found that he made efforts of which I believe no one who has not that thirst in the blood can estimate the cost, to subdue the wild craving for drink which seized him whenever he felt especially wretched. So far as I know, for more than two months, he never once exceeded, and this first led me to hope, with a certain amount of confidence, that, under favourable circumstances, my poor friend might yet overcome his fatal tendencies. He was now, nominally, in Mr. Strahan's house; and had he been required to do desk work, he might perhaps have applied himself; but for the particular duty required of him—that of going up and down the world preaching the faith in Strahan's sherry—he was at present wholly unfit; and his employer must have found him an unprofitable servant. His thoughts were never absent from one subject; he wandered through the streets, looking gloomy or ferocious as he was in the humour, and if he met a friend, and tried to blow Strahan's trumpet in a few minor chords, the effect was only to make the man hurry away, muttering, "Good Heavens! How changed that fellow is! He was the jolliest chap I ever knew at Trinity." The advocacy of gay, jovial Harry Walbrooke would have met with eminent success, as I doubt not the astute wine-merchant had calculated; but this same youth, transformed into a sad, stern man, proved but an indifferent huckster of the wares he was paid to dispose of. The only satisfaction which Harry got out of the business was, I am afraid, the knowledge that he was doing something eminently annoying to his uncle. No communication had passed between them for some weeks. Lena wrote, much to our surprise, that Mr. Walbrooke was absent from home; he had not been away half a dozen times in the last ten years. I had a latent apprehension that he had gone to resuscitate his interest, to Harry's detriment, in some long-neglected nephews in the north. But it was not so.

One evening in June—I remember it as if it were yesterday—I sat alone at my open window. In the distance there was the roar of the mighty city, lessening hour by hour. Above me the broad arms of night raised themselves to embrace the few

gold-haired children of the sky who yet lingered there. And evoked by that image of the end which comes to hush and darken all, in my heart arose the oft-recurring question, How shall it be after this life is ended? Shall there be a dawn where the love, the fidelity, which remain unknown till darkness comes to swallow the loving and unloved alike, shall blossom and bear fruit? Such questions trouble me no more, thank God, for the time is now near at hand when I shall know all.

I was interrupted by the entrance of the maid-servant, who announced a gentleman, and I recognised in the twilight Mr. Walbrooke.

"I am in London for only a few hours," he began, "and as all communication between my hopeful nephew and myself is at an end for the present, I wish you to give him a piece of intelligence, Luttrell. Miss Fleming is to be married to Mr. Ridgway, of Hapsbury, next week. This, I hope, will bring him to his senses."

"God help him!" I groaned. "Oh, Mr. Walbrooke, may you never have reason to repent this bitterly!"

The squire gave me a look of offended surprise. "Why so, pray? Not on Harry's account, I conclude? Nothing but this would cure him of his folly. He himself wrote to me as much. And as to Miss Fleming——"

"She will be miserable!" I interrupted, with a vehemence which must have contrasted strangely in the squire's ears with my usually mild utterances. "She has consented to this self-sacrifice from a mistaken sense of her duty to Harry—and to you, Mr. Walbrooke, and perhaps, also, to Mrs. Fleming, who is in great poverty."

"Mrs. Fleming did, I am glad to say, second me very strongly, and therein showed her good sense," said the squire, with a dogged sententiousness. "It would have been flying in the face of Providence for a girl in Miss Fleming's position to persist in rejecting an offer of such exceptional brilliancy. She might wait long enough before she got such another."

"Better wait all her life—better wear her fingers to the bone! No blessing ever yet came upon a marriage where there was no love, and there is no love here upon either side."

"You have no right whatever to assume that," and a red spot rose upon the squire's cheek. "Mr. Ridgway has, I am sure, a very sincere affection for the girl. In fact, he has proved it by his pertinacity. He has renewed his proposal three times."

"Yes," I cried, "because he thinks the world will condone his past offences when he is married, especially when married to so charming a creature."

"I am surprised that you should lend an ear to such miserable scandal," he rejoined; but there was more of annoyance than conviction in his tone.

"I don't lend an ear, in the sense of believing it, Mr. Walbrooke; but you cannot deny that it exists, nor can you, I suspect, deny that this is one of the chief causes of Mr. Ridgway's pertinacity; this, and the fact that his vanity would suffer at being rejected by a poor governess, after proclaiming his admiration so openly as he did."

"I don't say that that may not have something to do with it," said the squire, with the air of a man who magnanimously concedes more than he need; "but I do say that Ridgway, with all his cleverness, and with such a fortune and place, might have married any one. Few dukes' daughters would have refused him; and I think it shows that he has a real—a—affection for Miss Fleming to have selected her."

"It only shows that he has that for which he has always been renowned, good taste. But I am not thinking of him, but of her, Mr. Walbrooke. Were he ever so much in love that would make no difference in the fact that her heart is entirely Harry's."

"Pshaw! All boys and girls who live in the same house fancy themselves in love. Harry happens to be more obstinate than most boys, that is all."

"So I am afraid you will find."

"He has chosen to become bagman to a wine merchant, with the intention of frightening me into concession, I suppose; but he will find himself mistaken. As long as he continues to disgrace my name I can have nothing to say to him; so you may tell him, Luttrell. But this marriage will, I hope, open his eyes, and make him see the utter folly of his conduct."

I shook my head. "Is Miss Fleming's present residence still a secret, Mr. Walbrooke?"

"No; indeed, she asked me to beg you to go down and see her, if you were able, any day this week. They are living in a cottage near Waltham, where Mrs. Fleming's mother resides. You understand, of course, that this information is for you, not for Harry. I asked her whether she would wish to see him, and she said 'on no account.'"

The squire shortly after this left me. I resolved not to tell Harry the fatal news until I had had an interview with Assunta;

and, accordingly, the next morning saw me on the top of the coach, which started on its short journey at an early hour. I had no difficulty in finding Mrs. Fleming's humble dwelling, which was less a cottage than the dejected offshoot of a street, with a pretence at gentility, and a reality of hideous gloom. It stood at the end of a small wilderness of unfinished buildings of scarlet brick. The house itself was of the same material, with a bright green door, and brass knocker; it had no garden, no pleasant out-look, only the white dust of the road, and the hot glare of the surrounding houses. The door was opened to me by a little maid-of-all-work, of about fifteen, and she showed me into a room some twelve feet square, where sat Mrs. Fleming, Assunta, and three very red-faced children, at their early dinner. They were all in deep mourning, of course, and looked oppressed by the heat. The window was open, yet the room was, indeed, oppressive, partly owing to the fumes of an Irish stew, which hung about the dingy curtains, and mud-coloured paper, and the six horse-hair chairs. It is puerile to dwell on these details, and I know they heightened the sense of discomfort, and the contrast with all I had hitherto seen Assunta surrounded by. She rose, held out her hand, and introduced me to Mrs. Fleming, a silly-looking woman, who had once been pretty, no doubt, but whose face now, with its little pointed, red nose, was very unattractive. Sad it was, certainly, and sorrow generally interests me, but there was nothing sacred in the expression of this grief. It had taken sharp and querulous lines that played round the corners of the mouth; and she indulged in frequent "suspensions of the breath" in her flatulent discourse, which aggravated me. Assunta herself looked pale and worn. The children, two of whom were very young, were fed by her, and seemed to look to her, rather than to their mother, for everything, except constant scolding, wherein the poor lady evidently thought her maternal duty chiefly lay. When Assunta had given the children their rice pudding:

"I will now take Mr. Luttrell into the next room, dear mother," she said.

"As you please, my dear. Tommy, take your fingers out of your plate directly, and look what a mess you've made of your pinafore!"

I closed the door upon Mrs. Fleming's maternal strictures, and followed Assunta into the sitting-room on the opposite side of the passage, which was the counterpart

of the parlour, except for the addition of a horse-hair sofa, and the substitution of a coloured for a white cloth upon the table, on which were a Bible, a prayer-book, a work-basket, and some half-made frocks.

She sat down, and looked intently into my face. "How is Harry? How did he take the news?"

"He doesn't yet know it. I wanted to see you first. I wanted to know from your own lips that—that you had definitely made up your mind to this before I told him."

"I have definitely made up my mind," she said, in a low voice.

"And you have no misgiving? Forgive me for saying this, but if I may plead the privilege of an old friend——"

"You may, and I shall thank you; but I have weighed everything, dear Mr. Luttrell, and the result is—I have given my word to Mr. Ridgway. When I had once brought my mind to see that I must give up Harry, nothing that could happen to me signified much, and it seems to me the best thing for every one, except myself. If you knew all——" Here she sighed, and hesitated for a moment.

"I don't require to know all to be very sure that it cannot be right to sacrifice yourself thus."

"Oh, I had already done that," she said, shaking her head. "This is hardly to be called a sacrifice. I had certainly rather have worked for my daily bread if I had only had myself to think of; but I never disliked Mr. Ridgway, and he has behaved so nobly about poor Mrs. Fleming, that I feel deeply grateful to him. If my marrying him can make him happy——"

An impatient exclamation, I am afraid, burst from me, but I checked what I was about to say, and changed it to:

"Mr. Walbrooke, of course, it is who has brought this about? He was bent upon it from the very first."

"He would not have succeeded but for two things. First, Harry's insane letters to his uncle. I saw from them very plainly that he would continue to pursue this fatal scheme of his, and remain at open war with the squire as long as I remained unmarried. He said so; and, on some points, he has all the Walbrooke tenacity of purpose. Ah, if he only had it in all!"

"He has been battling manfully with temptation during the past three months," I said.

"Has he?" she rejoined, eagerly. "How thankful I am."

"And the other thing?" I asked. "What was that?"

She was silent for a moment.

"Not even Mr. Walbrooke knows; but I will tell you. Poor Mr. Fleming died terribly in debt, far more so than we had any idea of at first. After everything was sold, there was still a large deficit. Mr. Walbrooke was very kind, as you know, but what he gave me only went to relieve Mrs. Fleming's immediate necessities, and I could not have applied to him again. Of course you are aware that Mr. Fleming and his wife brought me up out of charity, that I am indebted to them for everything I have ever had? When Mr. Ridgway offered to settle four hundred a year upon my adopted mother, and she, poor soul! went down on her knees to implore me not to reject this maintenance for her, urging, very justly, that thus only could I repay all that her husband and she had done for me, how could I refuse? What possible means had I of extricating her from her troubles but this? I might get eighty or a hundred a year as a governess, if I had great luck, and send her sixty or seventy out of it—that was the utmost I could look forward to doing for her and these penniless children. As I have already said, my sacrifice was made—to ratify it thus was not so hard, and it seemed to be my duty."

"I can't think so, and I can't forgive Mrs. Fleming——" I began, warmly, when the door opened, and the widow entered, followed by her children. Assunta took up one of the frocks from the table, and Mrs. Fleming another, and both began stitching assiduously.

"I suppose Assunta has told you all about her prospects?" said the widow. "It is the most wonderful piece of luck, as Mr. Walbrooke says. If poor Mr. Fleming could only have lived to see it! Ah, dear! (Sammy, leave that thimble alone.) Yes, when I think of the day we found her, nearly twenty-one years ago now (Jane, will you sit still, once for all?), I little thought she would live to be a great lady—the sickliest-looking baby I ever saw—a great contrast to all mine, even the three I lost; ah, dear! they weren't so puny. I have had plenty of trouble, Mr. Luttrell. Some people are born to trouble, just as others are born to luck, like Assunta. To be left with four children, as I am! Ah, dear!"

I felt that I could not talk to this woman, and turned to ask Assunta where she was to be married. Mrs. Fleming answered for her.

"Here, I am sorry to say. Mr. Walbrooke asked us to go to the Grange for it, which would have been much nicer, but

Assunta wouldn't. She didn't consult my feelings, nor how poor Mr. Fleming would have felt, had he been alive, at having to receive Mr. Ridgway in such a house as this. (Tommy, get down off that chair this minute, sir. My dear, reach me your scissors.) No, it is very humiliating, after being accustomed to one's own plate as I always have, and such beautiful table-linen, for poor Mr. Fleming liked everything nice, and such books as he had; all sold, with every stick of furniture in the house (Jane, if you can't sit still you must go out of the room), and then to come down to pewter, with Mr. Ridgway's elegance, too. Ah, dear, dear!"

"There is no disgrace in poverty, mother, and Mr. Ridgway is too truly a gentleman for you to worry about such things."

Still Mrs. Fleming ran on for another half-hour a Jeremiad over her various losses; her husband, her own health, and her piano, her Brussels carpets, her three dead children, and her Worcester china, all very much in the same tone, interspersed with sundry moral fillips to Tommy, Jane, and Sammy, as irritating to the tempers of those poor little animals as the constant twitches of a heavy-handed driver are to his horses' mouths. And Assunta—what a life must hers have been during these past three months! What a sore addition to her other trials, the blister of this foolish woman's tongue!

By-and-bye I looked at my watch, and seeing that it wanted but a quarter of an hour to the time when the coach was to start, I made bold to ask if Assunta would walk part of the way to the inn with me; for it was my only chance of getting another word alone with her. She ran and put on her bonnet.

As soon as we were in the street, "You will understand, I am sure," she said, "why I couldn't go to the Grange. Poor Mrs. Fleming thinks it is my pride, and I cannot undeceive her. There are two things I have not strength and courage for—to revisit the place where I was so exquisitely happy, and to see Harry again."

"Have you any message to him?" I asked, after a pause.

"Tell him not to think too hardly of me, that is all. What I have done has been because I believed it to be for his good."

"I hope it may prove so, but I doubt it."

I should not be a friend to you both if I withheld from you my belief that you are utterly wrong. I see the force of all your arguments for this marriage, but you cannot make black white. And Harry will not see it as white: don't deceive yourself."

We were crossing one of the streams that intersect the town. She stopped for a minute, as if transfixed by some agonising thought, and leaned on the little wooden parapet of the bridge, looking over into the water, so that I could not see her face. Presently she raised it and said:

"He is young, he will get over his grief; and by-and-bye, in the course of time, he will find some woman who loves him nearly as well, perhaps, as I do, and whom he can love, and whose influence over him is greater than mine has been. In the mean time, Mr. Luttrell, there will be this immediate good. He and his uncle will be reconciled."

I thought differently; but it would have been cruel to harass her mind further by raising doubts on this point. She had resolved to immolate herself. I felt myself powerless to prevent the consummation of this mistaken self-sacrifice, and having once spoken, what right had I to add to her misery, poor child! by painful and fruitless discussion?

I heard the guard wind his horn: and taking her hand within mine, I murmured:

"May it all turn out as you expect. God bless you! Mr. Ridgway has bought a pearl of great price, if he knows how to value it. May you at least find peace in your new home!"

And so we parted on that little bridge; and I left behind me the brightest, the best, the dearest vision of my youth. When we next met, that vision had become a sad reality among the stern, hard truths of middle life.

On MONDAY, the 4th of DECEMBER,

WILL BE PUBLISHED THE

EXTRA DOUBLE NUMBER FOR
CHRISTMAS, 1871,

ENTITLED

SLAVES OF THE LAMP.

END OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

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CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I. FATHER AND SON.

THE revelation made by Mrs. Entwistle to her nephew had a twofold effect upon Gerald's mind. He was of course filled with joy at the discovery that his belief in his mother's innocence was well founded, but this joy was dashed with keen regret at the thought that the woman to whom he owed so much had acted so wickedly towards her sister; and that, even at the time of her narration, she did not express, and probably did not feel, the slightest remorse for the crime she had committed, and the misery which she had brought about. A great difficulty presented itself to the young man. He felt it to be of paramount importance that his mother's memory should be at once freed from the stain which, as his father believed, had so long rested upon it, and that though reparation was of course impossible, Sir Geoffry might be able to recal the associations of his married life without regret, and to believe in the asseverations of her innocence which his wife had made on parting from him.

To bring about this result successfully would, however, be no easy matter. In the first place, Gerald knew that Mrs. Entwistle's state of health was such as to render her extremely susceptible to any sudden emotion; and he dreaded the effect which the expression of his determination to reveal to his father the real state of the circumstances regarding Mr. Yeldham, and the error under which that unfortunate man's life had been sacrificed, might have

upon her. Then again, even supposing that he were enabled to break his intention to Mrs. Entwistle, without causing her much suffering, and to obtain her consent to the steps which he proposed to take, Gerald felt more than doubtful of the reception he might meet with at his father's hands. Even with his small experience of Sir Geoffry's temper, Gerald felt it probable that the old general would not merely discredit the information which his son sought to convey to him, but that he would possibly regard the whole affair as a scheme concocted by Gerald, with a view to his reinstatement in his position as his father's heir. However, the young man had made up his mind that the difficulties, of whatever nature they might happen to be, must be surmounted; and when he rose on the morning after Mrs. Entwistle's confession, it was with the full determination of taking prompt action towards the vindication of his mother's memory, even though his aunt might choose to withhold the consent which he intended to ask of her.

Whatever effect the narration of those dark passages in her early career may have had upon Mrs. Entwistle, she had herself sufficiently under control to prevent the manifestation of any outward sign; and when Gerald entered her boudoir, he found her lying on her sofa, in her usual position by the window, and in her usual state. She received him with her ordinary affectionate greeting; asked of his intended movements for the day, and chatted on indifferent topics, never making the smallest allusion to the occurrences of the previous evening, even when Gerald inquired, with what he intended to be special emphasis, after her health.

"I feel just as usual, my dear boy," she said, with a faint smile, "and if I continue

as I am now, I shall almost bring myself to believe that Doctor Asprey is wrong, and that I, as it were, exist upon my illness. That was a sharp attack that I had last night, but it seems to have left no special ill effect behind it, as I am in my normal state of lassitude and weariness."

"Even that is good hearing," said Gerald, "for I was prepared to find you a prisoner to your room, and I had something particular to say to you."

"Again," cried the invalid, with uplifted eyebrows and a quaint expression of horror in her face. "Oh, for the happy days, when we had no mysterious communications to make to one another. I begin to feel myself like a modernised Mrs. Radcliffe, and expect to find trap-doors in the library floor, and see sheeted spectres gibbering in the park."

"You will readily understand what I have to ask you," said Gerald. "I need not enter into the details of the quarrel between father and son. I may simply say that it arose from my obedience to an obligation laid on me by my mother on her death-bed, and——"

"Is it positively necessary, my dear boy, that we should enter into these family matters?" asked the invalid, querulously.

"It is," said Gerald, "in so much as that in his conduct to me, as in every act of his life subsequent to his parting from my mother, Sir Geoffry has been guided by a belief in his wife's misconduct, if not actual shame. It is necessary that he should be enlightened on that matter, and that the truth should be told to him."

"Gerald," cried Mrs. Entwistle, with an ineffectual struggle to raise herself on her couch, "you would not betray me?"

"I would vindicate the memory of the dead," said Gerald.

"But at my expense. Wait till I am gone, my dear boy; you will not have to postpone your explanation long, and—and my views have somewhat altered since last night."

"You wish you had not told me this story," said he, bending over her and taking her hand.

"With all my soul I wish it," said Mrs. Entwistle, earnestly. "It is natural enough and to be expected, of course, but your manner seems changed and different towards me this morning. And I—I have been, and am so fond of you."

"But she was my mother," said Gerald, sadly. "Ah, you will not leave her memory with this stain upon it! I am, I know, the only person in the world whose affection

you care for, and God knows it is not for me, owing as I do almost everything to your kindness, to sit in judgment on matters which took place almost before my existence. Your conduct to her has been atoned by your conduct to me, and if my father lost his wife through your acts, I have found a second mother in you."

As he said these words he bent over the couch, and kissed the wan cheeks, down which the tears were coursing. Then he continued: "But you will not refuse to make reparation by letting me see my father to clear his mind of the groundless suspicion which has so long possessed him, and of showing how harshly his wife was treated by him."

"I should not object to that," said Mrs. Entwistle, with something of the old sarcastic ring in her voice. "Major Heriot never appreciated my sister, and, even in his most devoted days, treated her with a frigid courtesy which would have led any woman with a little spirit to hate him."

"You will not object, then, to my seeing Sir Geoffry, and acquainting him with what you told me last night?"

"You must do as you will," said the invalid, wearily; "but a very short time, and I shall be beyond the influence of his wrath, however violent it may be."

So the concession was granted, though unwillingly, and Gerald determined to go down to Springside, where he had ascertained that his father was residing, and make an effort to see him. He was sufficiently acquainted with the violence of Sir Geoffry's temper to appreciate fully the difficulty of his task, and he allowed to himself that, even if he succeeded in obtaining admission into his father's presence, he would yet be far from attaining the object of his visit. Once admitted to an audience, much doubtless rested with him, and his success would greatly depend on his power of holding himself in check, and rendering himself invulnerable to the taunts, and worse than taunts, with which he was likely to be greeted. Looking at the motives which influenced him, the restitution of his mother's good name, and the reparation of the wrong which had been done to her during her lifetime, and to her memory since her death, the young man felt that he would be enabled to fulfil his self-imposed task in the spirit in which he had conceived it. It would be a difficult task no doubt, but it should be undertaken in a proper spirit, and would, he hoped, be carried out successfully.

Gerald did not purpose going to Spring-side until next morning. He did not think it would be kind to leave Mrs. Entwistle until he had seen whether the access of illness, which had induced her to send for Doctor Asprey, gave any signs of reappearance, and, moreover, he had something else to do that morning. Something particular, apparently, so attentive was he to a second toilet, which he seemed to think it necessary to perform after quitting his aunt's presence, and at the conclusion of which he left the house and struck across the park towards Kensington Gardens.

The broad walk, which had been lately filled with fashionable promenaders, was now almost deserted, and the turfy paths of the long green alleys were already dotted with freshly fallen leaves. In many spots the grass had been worn away entirely, in more it was brown, brittle, and stubby; the leaves lay where they fell, being not yet sufficiently numerous, in the gardener's opinion, to be worth the trouble of collection. The children usually found there, taking in the best imitation of fresh air under the circumstances, had gone to the seaside, accompanied by their nursemaids, and even the shabby-genteel people, whose business in life seems to be to sit on the extreme edges of the seats and eat captains' biscuits, had forsaken their haunts. Struck by the contrast between the gaiety which the scene had presented on the last occasion of his visiting it, and the desolation which then characterised it, Gerald Hardinge stopped and looked round, then, with a shiver, was turning away, when he caught sight of a figure, with its back towards him, some little distance off.

A female figure, trim, neat, and lissome, strolling along with somewhat languid steps, and idly pushing up the grass with her parasol. Just the sort of figure to induce a wish to see the face belonging to it. No wonder, then, that Gerald Hardinge, after a minute's hesitation, started in pursuit.

"I'm going blind, I fancy," he said to himself, as he hurried along. "It was by the merest chance that I saw her, and yet I felt certain she would not neglect my summons. How wonderfully graceful she is; how much improved since the old days!"

The next moment he had gained the lady's side. She gave a little cry as he stood suddenly before her, hat in hand. She had been startled by his appearance, and the colour flushed up into her cheeks.

It was Rose Pierrepont, with her promise of delicate beauty developed and matured, and with the bloom of health and quiet content in place of the anxious, irritable expression which her face formerly wore.

"You startled me, Mr. Gerald," she said, with a half-laugh. "You came so quietly behind me on the grass that I did not hear you."

"But you expected me, Rose?"

"Oh yes; but at the moment I was thinking of—something else."

"You are as candid as ever."

"You would not have me otherwise, Mr. Gerald?"

"Certainly not. Equally certainly I will not have you call me Mr. Gerald."

"What would Mrs. Entwistle think if she heard me call you anything else?"

"Mrs. Entwistle is not here. What made you refer to her?"

"I don't know; she came into my head."

"I notice she always does come into your head, or, at least, you always allude to her, whenever you are annoyed. You did not like Mrs. Entwistle, Rose?"

"I did not take any violent fancy to her."

"So I was sorry to see."

"Were you? Well, then, if it will please you, I will take a violent fancy to her, Mr.—I mean, Gerald."

"Don't be absurd, Rose; you are in one of your teasing humours, which always provoke me."

"Then you should not have written to me to meet you at so short a notice, and come upon me so suddenly when you arrived. It was lucky your letter found me, as I might have started off for my holiday."

"I knew you would not go without letting me know, and giving me the chance of saying good-bye. Rose, can you be serious for a minute?"

There was something in his tone which caused her to put off her light laughing manner in an instant. "Of course I can, Gerald," she said, earnestly. "If my nonsense pains you I——"

"You know there is nothing I love to listen to so much," interrupted Gerald; "but just now I have something in downright sober earnest to say to you, my child. You have known me, little Rose, in two very different positions in life."

"Yes," said Rose, rather sadly; "long ago, when you were a scene-painter; now, when you are a—a swell."

"Yes; you fancy that I have returned to

my family, but it is not so. Mrs. Entwistle is my aunt, it is true, but I have yet living a father, who has discarded me."

"Discarded you, Gerald—for what?"

"Principally for siding with my mother, with whom also he had quarrelled, believing she had deceived him. It has just been my fortune to discover that his suspicions of my mother were utterly unfounded, and I am going to him to-morrow to prove this to him."

"Coming on such an errand he will be sure to welcome you and take you back into favour, Gerald," said Rose, with yet a touch of sadness in her voice.

"I am by no means so sure of that. If he does, well and good. I will ask nothing of him but his recognition and his name."

"What is his name, Gerald?"

"That you shall not know, little Rose, until I have seen him. Curious, too, that you should ask, as it is a matter in which you may be interested."

"I, Gerald? How?"

"Surely you must know! Surely long ere this your heart must have told you how dear you are to me, Rose. Will you not answer me?" he said, taking her hand and passing it lightly through his arm.

"I—I—I thought you liked me, Gerald," said the girl, looking down.

"Liked you!" he echoed, with a laugh.

"I like you so much that I am going to ask you to be my wife, to share my fortunes, and to take my name when," he added, with a touch of bitterness, "when it is decided under what name the remainder of my life is to be passed! What answer do you give me, Rose?"

She gave him none, beyond what was conveyed in the momentary upward glance of her large eyes, and in the slight pressure from the little hand that trembled on his arm. It was, however, apparently enough for Gerald, who, after glancing hastily round to see that there were no observers within sight, bent down and touched her forehead with his lips.

"Thank you, dearest one," he said.

"You are taking a leap in the dark, and have not the least idea what fate may be in store for you. But, whatever it is, I shall be by your side to share its troubles. Another twenty-four hours will determine whether I am to remain an outcast under a false name, or to resume my position as my father's son."

"You are determined, then, to see your father, Gerald?"

"I am. It is my duty to tell him what I have heard, and to endeavour to satisfy

him of its truth. Whether I fail in this, or whether I succeed, all I should ask of him would be the permission to bear his name. I want no money from him. I would take none."

"Then if your father is still obdurate against you, Gerald, you will go on living as you have done lately?"

"Not entirely, little Rose. In the first place, I shall have you with me, and in the next I am determined to shake off this laziness under which I have so long been labouring, and to work for my living."

"That's good hearing, Gerald," said the girl, looking up delightedly at him. "What you said last, I mean," she added, noticing the smile upon his face; "though I don't mean to deny that to become your wife will be the fulfilment of my dream of happiness."

"It is very sweet of you to make such a confession. How long have you had this dream, Rose?"

"Almost all my life, it seems to me. It began I think in the old days at Wexeter, when you used to give me drawing lessons in Miss Cave's lodgings. You recollect Wexeter, Gerald, and Madge?"

"Yes," he said, "of course I recollect Madge well."

"I was almost jealous of Madge once, I remember. I used to think you liked her, Gerald, but that of course was absurd. Poor darling Madge, how surprised she will be at what I have to tell her! I shall write to her directly I get home."

"I think you had better leave it until you can tell her something more definite, dearest," said Gerald. "By to-morrow night I shall know what effect the communication I have to make to you will have upon my father, and you can then write more fully as to your future to your sister. Now talk to me about yourself."

The approach of autumn, which strikes with dismay the inhabitants of most watering-places, whether inland or on the coast, is regarded very calmly by the dwellers in Springside, for to those who have been prudent enough to invest their savings in lodging-houses in that favourite spot, there is no portion of the year which does not bring its due amount of profit and gain. When the summer is over, and the London families, who have been making a holiday sojourn in the city of springs, return to the city of smuts, the Springsidites view the departure of their visitors with perfect composure. They know that after a very short interval, just long enough for

them to go through the process of a "thorough clean up," and the substitution of winter for summer furniture, their lodgings will be again filled, and this time by a class of tenant, rich, valetudinarian, and certain to remain for many weeks. This interval, however, though made much of by those who take advantage of it for the performance of necessary labour, is generally voted desperately dull by the better class of inhabitants, most of whom try to make their escape to more congenial places. Sir Geoffry, in particular, very much resented the state of affairs at this dull season of the year. Most of his club cronies were away; it was next to impossible to get up a rubber; and even the few friends admitted to the intimacy of Wheatercroft, were among the defaulters. Cleethorpe was shooting in Scotland, and Mr. Drage had gone over to attend a church congress, which was being held at Bircester. Sir Geoffry could have put up with all of this if Mrs. Pickering had been at home to talk with and read to him, but she had asked for a few days' holiday, and of course he had not dreamed of refusing her.

The instant she was gone, the old general felt her loss. There was a letter from Irving—a long letter—full of business, which he would have liked to submit to her consideration, and in which he would not stir without her advice. He had grown accustomed to consult his housekeeper in almost everything, and to place great reliance on her judgment.

"A wonderful woman, sir!" Sir Geoffry said of Mrs. Pickering to his friend Cleethorpe, just before the gallant captain started for his shooting-box in the Highlands. "A wonderful woman! Most women have a knack of hitting the right nail on the head, but this they do by accident, by intuition, as it is called, and can never tell you why! Now, Mrs. Pickering is always right, and can always give you her reason for being so. You did me an immense service, sir, when you persuaded that lady to undertake the management of my household."

But Mrs. Pickering was gone, and had taken her judgment with her, and Sir Geoffry was left alone, to use strong language at his loneliness and the dreariness of his house, and to render the lives of his servants almost insupportable, by the variety of his orders and the caprices of his querulous temper.

On the second night after Madge's departure, just at the time that she was entering the grounds at Hollycombe, Sir

Geoffry was seated at the window of the dining-room, looking out into the garden, and wondering what he should do if chance ever removed Mrs. Pickering from his service. The mere idea of such a contingency made him hot with vexation; it was not like the same place without her, and nothing seemed to go on rightly in her absence.

"And yet," said the old general to himself, "and yet I'm likely to lose her at any moment. She's a young woman still, and a handsome woman, and attractive in every way, and is certain to be picked up sooner or later. If I were a younger man myself I should be too glad of such a wife; and of course there are hundreds who have the same idea. Perhaps at this very moment there is some confounded fellow talking to her, and making up his mind that he'll ask her to marry him. What's that?"

He started, and, shading his eyes with his hand, peered out into the gloaming.

"I could have sworn I saw a figure," he said, turning back into the room, "but there is nothing there. I'm nervous to-night, and shall set the doctor's warning at defiance, and take a glass or two of port. Absurd to think that a man of my figure, without any hereditary tendency to gout, should——"

He stopped, attracted by the noise made by the opening of the door, and looked in that direction. He saw the door open, and a man's figure enter the room and advance quickly towards him. For an instant the old general thought he was attacked, and his hand closed upon the neck of the decanter he was lifting from the sideboard, as his handiest weapon of defence.

The figure, however, stood upright and motionless before him. As far as he could make out in the dull uncertain light it was that of a tall, well-knit young man, with a full and flowing beard.

Sir Geoffry eyed it for a moment in silence, then he said: "Who are you, and what is your business here, sir?"

"I want to see you," was the reply; but no sooner did the old general hear the tones of the voice from which it was uttered, than he relaxed his hold of the decanter, and stepping a pace forward, waved his hand toward the door.

"I know you now!" he cried, in loud and angry tones; "I cannot discern your features, but I recognise your voice! How dare you insult me by your presence? Leave the house at once!"

"Father," said the young man, submissively.

"I have forbidden you ever to use that word to me," cried Sir Geoffry. "To what am I indebted, sir, for the honour of this visit? The last time I saw you, you were full of your great career, and swaggered about not touching the money which was your due. I presume that delusion is at an end, and that you have come to claim your rights?"

"I have," said Gerald, "but not in the way that you imagine. I have come to claim my right to be regarded as your son; my mother's right to atonement for the grievous wrong you did to her while living, and which you have continued to her memory! Oh, sir, I told you I would make it the business of my life to discover the real story of Mr. Yekldham's acquaintance with my mother, and to prove to you that your jealous fears of her were groundless. I can prove all this to you now; I have come here to do so!"

"It is a lie!" cried the old man, stretching out his hands, and trembling with passion. "You have come here because your funds are exhausted, and your creditors refuse to trust you further! You can have the money, sir; it is yours by right; there is no occasion for you to descend to such paltry subterfuge."

"Father, I implore——"

"I insist, sir, upon your discontinuing to address me in that manner," said the old man, ringing the bell. "Make your application to me in a business way, through a lawyer, and it shall be attended to. Riley!" he cried to the servant, who appeared at the door, "what were you doing to permit this person to make his way into my presence? Show him out instantly, and never give him admittance here again."

Gerald looked as if he would have spoken, but the old servant touched him on the shoulder, and sorrowfully preceded him out of the room.

TAMMANY CHIEFS.

THE city of New York at this moment is the scene of a remarkable struggle between the people and what was a few short months ago the strongest, and most absolutely irresponsible government in the world. The great and sumptuous city, spreading its wealth over the heights of Brooklyn and the marshes of New Jersey, grasping in its rich embrace the opposite shores of the rivers which enclose the famous island of Manhattan, has been for years prostrate at the feet of a municipal government,

despotic as the Venetian oligarchy, mysterious as the Vehmgericht, corrupt as the College of Cardinals in the worst days of papal misrule. Deriving its power from the immediate suffrages of the sovereign people, submitting every autumn at the elections either for the mayoralty, shrievalty, commissionerships, or judgeships, its party ticket to the approval of the public, invariably victorious over all its enemies by such overwhelming majorities as to render opposition almost ridiculous, the city government apparently contained all the elements of solidity and permanence. It is true that an intelligent minority existed, but the intelligence, wealth, and respectability of the great city has ever shown itself lamentably apathetic on municipal and, indeed, on all political questions. During a long residence in New York, the writer was often astonished at the constant and utter indifference to every subject of local administration displayed by the prominent citizens and great merchants. The answer invariably vouchsafed to all his queries was, "The whole thing was a dirty business—too filthy for a gentleman to touch; far better to let things alone, bad as they were!"

"You see," continued a thoroughly representative New Yorker, "the rascals who are in power now are gorged with plunder; they have the most palatial residences, the most gorgeous furniture. They drive the fastest horses, smoke the largest cigars, drink the dearest brands of wine, wear the biggest diamonds on the dirtiest hands, and eat—with their knives—the best dinners in the city. They have every temptation (though I admit they very seldom yield to it) to act decently, and rob moderately, and we must admit that what they steal with one hand they scatter freely with the other. Now, suppose for one moment that we were rid of these, and a fresh lot came into power, the new men would all be like greedy cormorants. They would have everything to get, do you see? whereas our present scoundrels have got it all. I guess we should only change the whips of Tammany for the scorpions of a new and famished crowd."

This gentleman by no means stood alone in his sentiments, and his remarks may be taken as a very fair expression of the prevailing opinion of what the Americans are pleased to call Uppertendom. The strong interest in local politics which forms so large a portion of every-day life in England, appeared to be utterly lost in a sensation of total and complete helplessness.

"What is the use of my voting at all?" said a graduate of Harvard, "when the last wild Irishman—imported, perhaps, not more than a month ago, and duly invested with all the rights of citizenship by fraudulent naturalisation papers—can walk down to the polls and neutralise my vote? It is of no use, sir. The educated classes in this city do not stand a chance against the illiterate mass of adopted citizens; they just hang together and carry everything before them, so that a white man, unless he can boast an O or a Mac in front of his name, has no more chance of occupying the smallest position than a nigger."

The wide prevalence of such doctrines as these, and the complete lapse of Upper-tendency into pococurantism, bore the fruit that might have been expected, and the whole patronage of the city, and the entire administration of the city revenues, fell into the hands of the remarkable institution holding its head-quarters at Tammany Hall. The hall, a huge building surmounted by a stone effigy of a colossal Indian, is situate in Fourteenth-street, in the very centre of New York, and here the chiefs of Tammany were wont to meet and decide on the campaign tactics of the democratic party.

It may, perhaps, be well to remind the English reader that the democratic is the conservative party in America, as opposed to the republican, black republican, or abolitionist party, now victorious so far as the central government of the United States is concerned. The democrats, however, have in many cases retained great local power, and are distinguished by their steady adherence to the old-fashioned doctrine of federalism, and the steady maintenance of the obsolete principle of states' rights, a theory propounding the absolute independence and separate sovereignty of each individual state. These doctrines were pretty well knocked on the head during the "late misunderstanding," as the great American war is sometimes designated, but they are still fondly cherished in the democratic bosom, and in few parts of America have the democrats so long held the reins of power as in the city of New York.

This party is in no slight degree indebted for the continuance of its power to the ever-increasing element of Irish immigration. Every Hibernian is almost, immediately on his arrival, pounced upon by "the boys," christened a good democrat, and made, by hook or by crook, a naturalised citizen at once. Should the youth be

gifted with a finer natural taste for drinking and fighting than for work, he, in course of time, becomes drafted into the ranks of the "shoulder-hitters" and "repeaters," or, in plain English, of those gentry who carry to a sublime point their obedience to the precept, "Vote early, and vote often," and, voting themselves in half a dozen different wards during the day, by their ruffianly demeanour very effectually deter more peaceful citizens from recording their votes at all.

To these may be added the army of roughs, generally the keepers of low gin-shops, gaming-houses, and the professional thieves, their friends, admirers, and accomplices. The latter, during the leisure hours they can spare from the exercise of their regular profession, devote themselves vigorously to the pursuit of politics and whisky, and many a rascal owes his escape from justice to the partial feeling of a judge, in whose election the thief or some of his friends had taken a prominent part.

Inquiring one day of a worthy merchant, a man of substance, if he knew anything of a sprightly young fellow, who appeared to know everybody, this gentleman gave me the following astounding reply:

"Don't know exactly—guess he is a gambler or a politician!"

The order wherein the several professions were named, gives a correct idea of the public feeling towards the two classes of adventurers.

A certain amount of chivalry is very absurdly supposed to attach to the "sport" or gambler by profession; his duties are arduous, his expenses enormous, he is frequently a large speculator in stocks and real estate, and from a hail-fellow-well-met point of view, is considered a better sort of fellow than a "one-horse" politician. The more fashionable dress and more polished manners of the "sport," also help to maintain his superiority; he often happens to have been, at some remote period, a gentleman, and, although often "broke," and very much "shattered" in health and reputation, he still retains some slight traces of his old mode of life; while the rising politician is often that most unhappy of wretches, a "cad," trying his best to appear a gentleman, and finding the purple and fine linen of newly acquired wealth and importance sit as ill on him as did the mantle in the old ballad on the shoulders of those dames whose reputation was not above scandal.

The low estimate accorded to their craft by the public, is not unfrequently a matter

of jest among the politicians themselves. A short time since two of these worthies were dining together at the Hoffmann House, when, one wishing to "take a rise" out of his friend, began:

"Say, Tom, what have you been doing to the press? These fellows are calling you more names than would fill a dictionary!"

"Oh!" replied the other, "I don't mind; in fact, rather like it! Why only the other day one of the papers compared me to Judas Iscariot" (Eye-scariot he pronounced it), "but I didn't mind!"

"No," rejoined his friend, kindly; "*you* didn't mind, of course, but—but how about Judas?"

The fashionable season of New York extends from November to Lent, and during this period a vast number of public balls on a huge scale are organised on various pretences. The Charity Ball, where two years ago Prince Arthur was the centre of attraction, is by far the most fashionable public ball of the season, and the élite of the city fail not to muster in great force; bright gems and brighter eyes may be counted, not in hundreds but in thousands. Next perhaps in importance is the ball of the Americus Club, an institution of the Tammany "stripe" of politics. At this monster gathering the display of diamonds is perfectly marvellous, the extravagant toilets provoke remark even in the city of extravagant expenditure, and among the most prominent guests are, or were, the chiefs of Tammany.

Conspicuous among these is a largely framed man, "with brawny shoulders four foot square;" huge, heavy-looking, but muscular withal; of ungainly aspect as to his limbs, labouring under an unfortunate incapability of finding gloves large enough, or boots creaseless enough, to encompass his vast extremities, but exulting in a deep chest heaving beneath a snowy expanse of linen decorated with an immense diamond solitaire. Surmounting this ungainly body is a massive head crowned with grizzled locks. From beneath a pair of bushy eyebrows gleam bright but sunken eyes, while a heavy beard, streaked with silver, conceals the massive jaw and determined chin. This man is indeed a man of mark, the object of many greetings and hand-shakings, friendly and servile, for he is a leader of men; his word is law, his smile is wealth, his frown ruin; he is the great chief, the Grand Sachem of Tammany, the Boss of the Ring.

At the outset of life a chair-maker on no very ambitious scale, nursed in the old volunteer fire department, an intensely political and slightly rowdy organisation, step by step from foreman of his engine onward and ever onward, higher and still higher, by ways straight or crooked, unaided except by his own quiet determination and iron will, has this man climbed to his present position. Ostensibly a mere commissioner of works, but really a civic Warwick—a municipal king-maker—he sets up and pulls down mayors, chamberlains, comptrollers, collectors. Ever near the great sun of the Tammany system is the quiet and unobtrusive man who enjoys the reputation of supplying intellect to the ruling body. This new Carnot, rejoicing in the initials of Peter B., is dubbed by his friends and foes—Peter Bismarck or Peter Brains Sweeny. He is the great initiator of the policy of pseudo-purity, bogus liberality, and judicious disinterestedness. He is ever preaching to his more voracious colleagues one invariable doctrine, "Gentleman, we must disgorge." Throwing a sop to Cerberus has ever been his leading idea, and when city chamberlain, he at once turned over to the city treasury a huge amount of interest invariably engulfed by preceding chamberlains. His policy was a sound one, and it redounds somewhat to his credit, that, having "got" enough, he was prepared to "run straight" if the rest of the Ring would have allowed him to do so.

Chatting to a bevy of fashionably-dressed ladies stands Slippery Dick, one of the most popular and best-abused men in Gotham. Slippery or not, Dick has managed to accumulate a huge fortune, and knows right well how to enjoy it. Very late in arrival, and very early in departure; last in the battle, and first in the retreat; is a slender, dapper-looking gentleman, happy in the possession of an elegantly trimmed beard, and taking pride in the "nice conduct" of an eye-glass. His step is light and springy, his hand ever ready to greet his innumerable friends; he is admirably "fixed" in the bluest of blue "clawhammer" coats, the whitest of vests, and the brightest of all possible brass buttons. With jaunty self-possession, with bright glance overflowing with genial good humour, he moves briskly among the throng, feeling quite at home, and why not? for he is, municipally speaking, the "biggest man" there, and rules, or rather seems to rule, the city according to his own good pleasure. Originally a smart lawyer, then

combining that profession with the ardent pursuit of politics and occasional excursions into the realms of literature, pleading causes, addressing "fellow-citizens," and editing the New York Leader by turns, he has made his way with very tolerable rapidity to the highest municipal position attainable. Like Warren Hastings and other great men, the mayor of New York is addicted to the composition of feeble verses; but what is this one small speck upon the face of an "ancillary planet?"

The city judges, some of whom correspond in position with our stipendiary magistrates, are in great force. One genial gentleman is accused on all hands of being kept by the managers or mismanagers of the Erie Railway; near him, gossiping with the gayest group in the house, is the plucky little judge, "Gunny," who has earned immense renown by actually daring to inflict severe sentences on several prominent malefactors. The mere fact of a judge being praised to the skies for doing his simple duty, affords a singular comment on the general administration of justice. Imagine Sir Thomas Henry being complimented in the Times, and compared to Chief Justice Gascoigne, for daring to commit Mr. William Sikes for trial!

Talking in a low tone, and earnestly, to the "Thunderbolt" of the Sixth Ward, a mountain of a man, resplendent in new broadcloth, broad smiles, and the inevitable diamonds, is a tall handsome man, not only better-looking, but more gentleman-like than most of the greater chiefs. He was formerly—but a few years ago—a clerk in the house of A. T. Stewart, but plunging into the sea of politics his talents have brought him to the top of the wave. Enthusiastic admirers predict his certain election at the next contest for the mayoralty.

But there is a buzz of excitement. Mrs. Mushroom's diamonds have just arrived. Every one is excited to a violent pitch; all crowd to obtain a glimpse of the diamonds. Mrs. Mushroom arrives leaning on her husband's arm. She is a showy-looking lady, with a great deal of fair hair more or less authentic. Her toilet is a marvel; heavy satins and priceless laces struggle for pre-eminence; her panier is the biggest, her train the longest in the room. But the diamonds—oh, the diamonds! they blaze and glitter, twinkle and dazzle, raising, meanwhile, storms of envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness in the bosoms of fair spectators. One of these last whispers confidentially:

"She is heavy on diamonds now, but

Mushroom once kept a gambling-house in 'Frisco, and has committed, I guess, about every crime that wasn't out of his reach."

Such is the rage of the celestial soul of woman at the sight of unattainable jewels.

There is only one slight drawback to these gigantic balls; it is clearly impossible to dance, unless a waltz on the area of an ordinary chess-board can be denominated dancing. But many who come to dance remain to drink, and at one of these balls my evil star led me among a knot of well-known politicians. These were men known to everybody in New York, men whom every one called by their Christian names. Of course the champagne flowed freely: it always is flowing freely on some pretence or other in Gotham. Equally as a matter of course, every man was formally introduced to all the rest, hands were very profusely shaken, and names went very much in at one ear and out at the other. It was a jolly, an excessively jolly party. Among the lively crowd was one gentleman conspicuous by the bravery of his apparel. Faultlessly, too faultlessly dressed, booted and gloved to perfection, oiled, curled, waxed, and gummed within an inch of his life, he was the very beau ideal of a New York dandy. The diamonds of this Adonis were enormous and his thirst prodigious. Suddenly this thing of beauty asserted his intention of depriving the assembly of the light of his presence. Addressing the little knot of revellers, and noticing some rather noisy proceedings in another corner of the room, Adonis opened his mouth and said with fine aristocratic disdain:

"I guess this thing is getting rayther mixed—I shall go." And with many affectionate farewells the elegant hero was suffered to depart. An inquiry touching the identity of the exclusive gentleman elicited the following reply: "You don't know *him*? I guess you don't know enough to go in-doors when it rains. That's the eminent forger, S., just out on bail!"

It may easily be imagined that a society striking its roots so deeply into the slough of the city, and not disdaining even the state prison as a nursery of voters, must be powerful indeed. Marshalled by old tacticians, veterans of many a meeting, men deeply learned in all the mysteries of axe-grinding, log-rolling, and wire-pulling, electing the very judges themselves, it is not to be wondered at that the forces of Tammany have so long proved irresistible. As Napoleon held his artillery in his hand, "comme un coup de pistolet," as Mr. Seward during the civil war boasted that the

liberty of every citizen was at the mercy of his "little bell," even so did the Grand Sachem of Tammany rule the minor slaves of the Ring.

The treachery of a discontented confederate has at last laid bare to the world the history of the most extraordinary system of fraud and spoliation that blots the page of history, and the eyes of Europe are now anxiously watching the efforts of the inhabitants of the Empire City to free themselves from the thralldom of the fatal Ring, which has so long enclosed them in its circle of corruption.

DESIGN OR DEVELOPMENT?

IN many parts of France the walks and alleys in parks and gardens are merely the natural loam beaten hard, sometimes mixed or coated over with road scrapings. In wet weather this forms a sticky, slippery surface, so inconvenient as to lead to the insertion of a line of small flags or stepping-stones along the principal walks, to render the passage along them possible after heavy rains. But in hot dry seasons they become hard and smooth, attaining the consistency of a compact stucco. In this state, their only defect is a tendency to cracking; but as the cracks are never wide nor deep enough to serve as pitfalls to the smallest babe, the fault offends the eye rather than the foot of those who walk upon them.

Besides the cracks, these plaster-like walks are often perforated with holes, out of which earth has been thrown by some agent within. By watching a hole, you will see issuing from and entering it, a bee-like insect, of mild and innocent mien—it actually feeds itself on the pollen of flowers—but which provides a store of fresh insect-meat for its young, in a way which would make the late Mr. Burke hide his diminished head. A medical man, Doctor Léon Dufour, discovered the crime, but failed to detect the real secret of the creature's operations. He calls the culprit *Cerceris bupresticide*—*Cerceris*, the buprestis-slayer.

In July, 1840, while going his rounds, a patient suffering under some small ailment which few people die of kept him waiting. To pass the time he went into the garden, and took his post in an alley on the lookout for something. But seeing no more than Sister Anne did at first, he searched the pathway for the habitations of burrow-

ing hymenopteræ. A tiny hill of sand, recently thrown out, caught his eye. It masked the orifice of a deep passage, which he traced by cautiously working with a spade. Soon he saw sparkling the brilliant wing-cases of a much-coveted buprestis; soon afterwards a whole buprestis; and then three and four entire buprestes delighted his gaze with their emeralds and gold. He could not believe his eyes. And that was only the beginning of his discoveries. Out of the ruins of the mine there crept a hymenopterous insect, which he captured as it tried to make its escape. In it he recognised the *Cerceris bupresticide*.

The entomologist's hot blood was up. It was not enough to have found the murderer and the victims; he must know who were the consumers of all this rare and valuable prey. It was as if he had found a human larder stocked with golden pheasants and birds of paradise. Having exhausted this first buprestiferous vein, which he had followed to the depth of a foot, he tried other soundings. In less than an hour he disinterred three *cerceris* dens, and his reward was fifteen whole buprestes, with the fragments of a still greater number. Here was a perspective to look forward to! In that locality he could catch in a few hours fifty or sixty female *cerceres* on the blossoms of various species of garlic. Their nests must be in the neighbourhood, provisioned in the same luxurious style. In them he would find, by hundreds, rare buprestes of which he had never been able to catch a single individual during thirty long years of assiduous hunting. And this dream soon became a reality.

Some days afterwards, while visiting the estate of one of his friends, in the midst of forests of maritime pines, he set about another *cerceris* hunt. Their dens were easily recognised. They were exclusively excavated in the principal alleys of the garden, where the compact and well-trodden soil offered the necessary conditions of solidity for the establishment of the insect's domicile. He examined, in the sweat of his brow, about twenty nests; for the work is not so easy as might be imagined. The treasures, and consequently the treasures, are never less than a foot underground. The best plan to effect the burglary is to thrust into the orifice of the mine a straw or a long stem of grass, to serve as a conducting clue, and then to sap round it with a garden spade, so as to lift out the central lump of earth in one or

two pieces, and then break it up circumspectly on the ground.

Lively were the perspiring huntsman's transports every time he exposed to view a fresh collection of beetles blazing with copper, emeralds, and gold, and which glittered all the brighter for the burning sunshine. Never, during his long career as a naturalist, had he gazed on such a spectacle, or enjoyed such a treat. He knew not which to admire most—the brilliant coleopteræ, or the wonderful sagacity of the cerceres who had put them in store. Incredible as it may seem, amongst more than four hundred individuals so warehoused, the closest investigation could not find the smallest fragment which did not belong to the genus *Buprestis*. The learned collectors, though simple hymenopteræ, had not once committed the most trifling mistake.

The cerceres show themselves to be no fools, by the way in which they shape and stock their subterranean nurseries. We have seen that they select hard, solid soil, well beaten, and exposed to sunshine. This choice implies an intelligence, or, if you prefer it, an instinct, which we might feel inclined to believe the result of experience. Light or sandy soils would undoubtedly be much easier to perforate, but they would be continually apt to give way and cave in. Our insect digs her gallery by means of her mandibles and her anterior tarsi, which, for this purpose, are garnished with teeth, like those of a rake. She makes the entrance wider than the diameter of her body, because it has to admit a prey of larger dimensions than herself. The gallery is not vertical, which would make it liable to be filled up by the wind and other causes. Not far from its origin it makes a bend, which usually runs, for seven or eight inches from south to north, returning then to its first direction. Beyond the termination of this final gallery the careful mother places her progeny's cradles. These latter are five separate and independent cells, disposed in a sort of semicircle, hollowed into the form and size of an olive, polished and solid in their interior. Each cell is large enough to contain three buprestes, the ordinary ration allowed to each larva. It appears that the mother fly lays one egg in the midst of the three victims, and then closes the cell with earth in such a way that when the provisioning of the whole of the brood is concluded, all communication with the gallery ceases to exist.

When the cerceris returns from hunting

with her quarry between her paws, she alights at the door of her underground lodging, and deposits it there for half a moment. Entering the gallery backwards, she seizes the helpless victim in her jaws, and drags it to the very bottom. Her visits are not confined to the time of providing her family with food. About the middle of August, when the buprestes are devoured, and the larvæ are hermetically sealed in their cocoons, the cerceris is seen to enter her gallery without bringing anything with her. It is clear that the anxious mother wishes to make sure, by repeated visits, that no enemy or accident threatens to destroy her progeny.

But by what inconceivable impulse is the cerceris, who feeds herself on nothing but the pollen of flowers, urged to procure, in spite of a thousand difficulties, a total different diet for descendants whom she will never behold, and to lie in wait on trees so dissimilar as oaks and pines, for the insects which are destined to become her prey? What entomological tact compels her strictly to confine herself, in the choice of her game, to one single generic group of insects of which she seems the born foe, and all the while capturing species which differ considerably amongst themselves in length, dimensions, and configuration?

The innate propensity which induces the cerceris to construct a nest for her young deep in the ground, manifests an instinct at once marvellous and sublime. That depth indicates that the tender larvæ will have to pass the winter snug in their burrows. Her maternal solicitude places them out of the reach of the inclemency of winter. And yet this careful mother will never see her offspring. Nor has experience given her the slightest hint that such things as winter and its frosts exist, since she came into the world during the great heats of summer, and after having provided for the future destinies of her family, she dies before the temperature is sensibly lowered. How can such facts be accounted for by any imaginable process of natural selection or progressive development? The phenomena are inexplicable, except by a belief in Divine Providence and Creative Wisdom.

The unearthing of the nests of the cerceris reveals a very singular fact. The buried buprestes, though showing no signs of life, are always perfectly fresh, as though killed that very day. Their colours are bright and life-like; their legs, antennæ, and the membranes which unite the segments of

their body are perfectly supple and flexible. It was at first supposed that their preservation was owing to the coolness of the soil, and the absence of light and air. But there must be some other cause of their incorruptibility, since twenty-four hours after the death of a beetle in summer its internal organs are either dried up or decomposed. The female cerceris, like the great majority of the hymenopteræ, is furnished with a sting and a poison-bag, and the guess was natural that the subtle liquid which inflicted death possessed antiseptic properties, preventing putrefaction. No one suspected that the captured and doomed buprestes were not really dead.

The real truth was discovered by M. Fabre, while observing the proceedings of the tuberculated cerceris, the largest European species, and divulged by him in the *Annales des Sciences Naturelles*. This cerceris excavates its burrows, and stores them with food during the last half of September. Instead of a flat footpath, it selects a vertical bank, but is not particular about the quality of the soil if it be but dry, and have a sunny aspect. The galleries are entirely the work of the females, who do not disdain to save themselves trouble by repairing burrows of the preceding year.

The victim selected by this cerceris is a large species of the weevil tribe, the *Cleonis ophthalmicus*. If the Bupresticide cerceris, without going beyond the limits of a genus, indiscriminately captures any of the species of that genus, the tuberculated cerceris, more exclusive, confines itself to a single species. One is curious to know the motives which influence so singular and decided a choice. There may be differences of flavour and of nutritious qualities in the respective game, which the larvæ doubtless appreciate, but the mother insect is probably guided by anatomical rather than gastronomical considerations.

After what M. Dufour has told us respecting the wonderful preservation of the insects destined to feed carnivorous larvæ, it is needless to add that the weevils deposited in the burrows or captive in the claws of their mortal enemy, although deprived for ever of all power of motion, are as completely untainted as when alive and active. Vivid hues, supple joints, healthy viscera, all conspire to make us doubt that the inert body lying before us is a veritable corpse, and we look at it with the expectation that we shall see the insect get up and walk away. In the presence of such facts,

it is difficult to believe in the action of an antiseptic liquid. Life, we feel assured, must still be there, although latent and passive. Life only, still resisting the destructive invasion of chemical forces, can thus preserve an organism from decomposition. Life is still there, minus sensibility and motion. We have before us a marvel which neither ether nor chloroform are capable of effecting, and for whose cause we must refer to the mysterious laws of the nervous system.

The important point was to ascertain the way in which the murder was committed. With some difficulty, M. Fabre succeeded in surprising the assassin in the fact. The cerceris thrust her poisoned dart two or three times into the joint of the weevil's prothorax, between the first and second pair of legs. In the twinkling of an eye the deed was done. Without the slightest convulsive pang, without any of those twitchings of the limbs which accompany an animal's dying agony, the victim fell motionless forever, as if struck by lightning. The stroke was terrible and admirable in its rapidity. Instantly the victor turned the vanquished on its back, seized it and flew off with it to her hidden den. By the effect of a microscopic puncture and an imperceptible drop of liquid, the weevil instantly lost all power of motion. But chemistry possesses no such subtle poison; consequently, we must inquire for the cause at the hands of anatomy and physiology. And to comprehend the mystery we must consider not so much the subtlety of the inoculated venom as the importance of the wounded organs, which are precisely the thoracic ganglions, whence spring the nerves which preside over all the motions of the creature's wings and legs.

The cerceres who, with a single stroke, benumb the animal functions of their prey, select precisely those species in which this nervous centralisation is the most complete. The buprestes suit them, because the nervous centres of the mesothorax and the metathorax are confounded in one single mass; the weevil suits them, because the three thoracic ganglions lie very close together, the two last even touching each other. The grand puzzle still remains unsolved: Who taught the assassin cerceres these refined secrets of anatomy?

The cerceres are not the only insects who display a like manifestation of marvellous foresight. The wasp family includes, besides the species which live in large com-

munities and build complex nests, like the hornet and the common wasp, others which lead a solitary life. One of these, the *Odynerus spinipes*, performs its task between the end of May and the beginning of July. Its first operation is to excavate a burrow, in clayey soil or stiff loam, at the further end of which it fashions a cell, plastering it neatly with home-made mortar. Each cell receives one egg.

The *odynerus* is a jack-of-all-trades. After working as a mason, it now plays the sportsman, beating the lucerne fields for the larvæ of a weevil. As soon as caught, it inflicts on each a wound which, without killing, paralyses them, arrests their growth, and retains them in the condition of living prey, incapable of resisting the worm which is to feed on them. At the bottom of each nest, close to the *odynerus's* egg, you will find a dozen green caterpillars rolled head and tail together, stuck by the back against the walls of the cell, without the possibility of moving.

The reason for this arrangement is clear. The *odynerus* lays only one egg in each cell. From that egg will issue a carnivorous worm who would disdain to eat stale or tainted meat. He must have fresh, tender, juicy, living game. His mother knows his peculiar tastes, and takes measures beforehand to indulge them. She fills the cell with animals which he will only have to devour one after the other, although their size enormously exceeds his own when he first comes forth from his egg. He eats the larva nearest at hand, without troubling himself about the future. He then proceeds to the second, then to the third, and so on till the twelfth course is eaten. Twelve caterpillars, one per day, neither more nor less, are his precise allowance. His mother, well aware of the required number, never exceeds it. Her entomological knowledge is still more surprising. She hunts after one single species of larvæ, and, what is still more curious, selects them all of nearly the same age. Disdaining larvæ that are too small for her purpose, she spares herself no trouble to find up those who are old and strong enough to bear a fast without perishing. If they died in the nest, and putrefied there, the stench would render it unbearable. Thanks to the peculiar wound she inflicts, their vital functions are instantly suspended; but life exists in a degree sufficient to preserve them from decay until they have satisfied the wants of the young *odynerus*, who then undergoes his

metamorphosis, tears open his chrysalis shell with his teeth, shakes, unfolds, and essays his wings, and then launches boldly into air and sunshine.

"What admirable maternal instinct!" some will exclaim. Others, looking further, will add, "What marvellous providential combination!"

AN AUTUMN DAWN.

THE sun-mist spreads a woof of quivering gold
On the blue mountain-tops, and o'er the crest
Of mighty Skiddaw, seamed with many a scar
By the fierce storms of ages, lies a cloud,
A crimson cloud, gold-fringed, and beautiful,
As is Aurora's brow, when from her couch
She, rosy-fingered, rises radiant,
Veiling her white limbs from the God of Day.

Upon the armoured furze the cunning work
Of spiders spreads its silver tracery,
Glistening with morning dew; and yellowing tufts
Of brake-grass, withered by the early frosts,
Give covert to the lark, whose clear shrill pipe
Wakes the hill-echoes with its melody,
Sole minstrel of these wilds.

The autumn tints,
Purple, and red, and chrome, are on the fells,
With scarce an eye, save that of shepherd boy,
To drink their wondrous beauty. On the wing,
In solitary state, the goshawk skims
The vast expanse of sky. Fair, bright, and pure,
Sweet, calm, and mellow, holy, grand, and still.
Voiceless, yet speaking with a thousand tongues,
Breaks forth the radiance of this autumn dawn.

"EXCEPT THE MAYOR."

WHO told me, I wonder, and when and where was I told, a preposterous story, with nothing in it, but which tickled me strangely at the time, and which has never failed so to titillate my risible sense, to this day? The tale went this wise. Some four decades since, when the Municipal Corporations Reform Act was passed, a number of respectable towns in England became boroughs, and were not only privileged to return members to parliament, but likewise received charters of incorporation, and were consequently empowered to elect a mayor, aldermen, and town council for purposes of local self-government. I can remember, indeed, when Brighton the magnificent was destitute of such dignitaries, and was only the Hundred of Herringbone, governed by a high constable; but the town of which I am about to speak, and which I will discreetly allude to under the name of Frogborough, was distant at least a hundred and fifty miles from the queen of watering-places, and was situate in quite a different part of the island. It was a very small town; but had become, mentally, so prodigiously inflated by its accession of importance as the seat of a

mayor and corporation, that the Gazetteers might have changed its name to Oxborough; and if it went on swelling in its own estimation in a proportionate ratio, I should not be surprised to hear that it had burst long ago. There alighted, one evening, at the principal hotel at Frogborough—it had only been an inn prior to the passing of the Mayor-giving Act—a certain personage whom I will call the Irreverent Traveller. He was a hungry traveller, too, and immediately after he had flung his baggage to the boots, demanded supper in a voice of thunder. It was the landlord who condescended to bring his repast, and to wait upon him while he partook of it; and for two good reasons did mine host so stoop to conquer. In the first place, his only waiter was assisting at an entertainment given that very evening by his worship the mayor of Frogborough; in the next, the landlord could not but think that a traveller with such a loud voice as that possessed by the Irreverent one, must be a personage of some importance. The traveller partook of a dishful of eggs and ham; two “helps” of cold roast beef; a considerable amount of pie, and a prodigious quantity of pickles; and made no more of a crusty quartern loaf than though it had been a French roll. He drank a pint and a half of strong ale, and two glasses of brandy-and-water; and then, flicking the crumbs off his knees with a great bandana handkerchief, he drew a deep breath, and slapping the landlord on the back—I warned you that he was an Irreverent Traveller—exclaimed:

“There! no man in England could have a better supper than I’ve had this night.”

The landlord didn’t mind being slapped on the back, for the guest looked like one who could afford to pay for such familiarities. Still, there was something in the dogmatical manner of the traveller that pained him, and he gave an “ahem!” in a deprecating tone.

“What’s that?” cried the guest, in a voice like unto the sound of a trumpet.

“I beg your pardon, sir,” the landlord began in a tone subdued but firm.

“WHAT?” repeated the traveller in stentorian accents.

“You said,” the landlord went on, politely but seriously, “that no man in England could have supped better than you have done this night.”

“Of course I did,” retorted the guest. “No man could have supped better.”

“Except the mayor,” said the host, quietly but solemnly.

“Except whom?” roared the traveller.

“The mayor—his worship the mayor of Frogborough—he’s a supping now,” the landlord, still deeply agitated, but still determined, replied.

“Hang the mayor of Frogborough!” shouted the Irreverent Traveller; “and tell him, with my compliments, that he may go to Bath.”

The landlord gazed for an instant at the iconoclast, and then rushed from his presence, calling for the constables.

They locked the Irreverent Traveller up in the cage; and the next day they brought him up before the borough bench, charging him with fearful crimes. The country was in a disturbed state just then, and a vinous postboy came forward to swear that the traveller had confided to him his complete approval of the principles contained in Cobbett’s Register. It was currently reported, too—being market-day—that the prisoner had been discovered lurking under the lee of a hayrick with a tinder-box and matches in one pocket, and an air-gun in the other, and at the farmers’ ordinary the rumour ran that he was SWING.

The end of the judicial investigation was the discharge, “with a caution,” of the traveller; whereupon the Irreverent one, planting his hat firmly on his head, delivered himself of the following seditious words:

“I shall be cautious, indeed, before I venture into this poky hole of a town again; and allow me to add, that of all the stupid old fools I ever met with, the landlord of your hotel is the greatest—except the mayor.”

He turned and fled, and justice was robbed of her prey.

How often, and in how many countries, has this idle jest occurred to me, often without rhyme or reason, and, in most instances, without any effort of volition on my part. But who has not his particular “ticklement?” The old story of the man at Stoney Stratford, who was so terribly bitten by fleas, and the older one still, of the ruined gamester who kicked his valet for always tying his shoe, will never want laughers.

“Except the mayor.” I should be ashamed to revert to this Frogborough story in this place, but that it has some tangible relation to certain circumstances in which I found myself on the evening of the Ninth of November last. I should have been in bed, for I was ill; but by a strange turn of Fortune’s whirligig I found myself arrayed in that solemn mockery of woe which is known as

evening costume, and standing on a scarlet covered dais, and by the side of a Chair, which, so splendid were its adornments, might, without any amplitude of language, have been termed a Throne, in the council chamber of the Guildhall of the City of London. It was close upon seven in the evening, and, my infirm health notwithstanding, I had a not unpleasant persuasion that dinner-time was at hand.

But how on earth did I contrive to find myself on that dais? The high places are not for me; of that fact I am fully aware. Below the salt, behind the screen, or in a high-up gallery looking down on festivities in which I was not, personally, privileged to participate, was, I knew full well, the proper and normal position which I should have occupied. How had I come hither? Physically, by means of the Metropolitan Railway from South Kensington to Cannon-street, and thence on my legs to Guildhall. But, morally, fortune, fate, chance, my "kismet," my star, my good or evil genius, had brought me to this pass; and, being there, I will not conceal the fact that I felt horribly uncomfortable. I am not fond of thrusting myself where I am not wanted. I shun the society of the great. I never talk to people in omnibuses, or railway trains, or at hotel table d'hôtes. I don't know the members of my own club. I don't know my fellow-shoppers in the establishment where I serve. I never picked up a friend at a watering-place. I never made but one chance acquaintance in my life. He was a charming man, and gave me his card; and a few days afterwards I read in the papers that he had been brought up at Bow-street on a charge of bigamy. Not but that a bigamist may be charming.

But I was desperately wretched on the dais because I happened to be the only person there in plain evening dress. "They can't take me for the American minister," I reasoned with myself, "because the name of his Excellency, who is standing within half a dozen paces of me, has been twice called out in the hearing of the brilliant assembly; and, besides, being a general officer in the American service, he is attired in a uniform closely resembling that of a British rear-admiral. Nor can it be assumed that I am the minister from Liberia; for, lo, he is black." For a moment I took cowardly refuge in the thought that I might pass for an M.P. for an Irish constituency; but alas! all the members of the Honourable House on the dais had had their styles and titles proclaimed. I indulged at last in the humble hope that

the company might think I was a waiter despatched from the hall to say that dinner was ready. That fiction perhaps might go down with the First Lord of the Admiralty, or the Queen's Ancient Sergeant, or the Chilian chargé d'affaires (they were all close to me); but I was guiltily conscious that the idea would not be for one moment entertained by certain officials of the corporation, whom I saw standing below the "haut pas" on the floor of the council chamber. I felt that the mace-bearer's eye was upon me. I shrank beneath the searching gaze of the common crier. What would I not have given to conciliate the placid old gentleman who wears the fur porringer on his head, and carries the sword of civic state? They knew full well that I was not present to proclaim the readiness of the banquet. Familiar with the minutest traditions of municipal hospitality, they knew that dinner would be announced by a personage in a court-suit, and with a flourish of trumpets. When you find yourself in places where you have no ostensible right to be present, there always remains open the loophole of saying that you are "a gentleman connected with the press." But, woe is me! on the evening of the Ninth of November I had not the remotest connexion with the press; and I had, besides, the uneasy consciousness that several gentlemen really affiliated to that valuable institution, and formerly my colleagues thereupon, were surveying me scornfully from afar off, and whispering among themselves, "Just like his confounded impudence. How the deuce did he get there?" It wasn't my fault. I owed my card of invitation to the banquet to the courtesy of a deservedly popular sheriff, and at an earlier period of the evening, after making my way to the dais, and paying the customary obeisances to the chief magistrate, I had endeavoured quietly to slip into the background, or into some quiet corridor, where, behind some bust, or flowering plant, I might see the grand folks passing in procession to the banqueting-hall. Woe! I was standing tranquilly on a common councillor's toes, and behind the towering chignon of a deputy's wife, when I was amicably taken into custody by an under-sheriff, and informed that I was to escort the daughter of an exalted civic functionary to the hall. I do declare that, at that moment, I would have preferred the tap on the shoulder from a sheriff's officer to the friendly message of the under-sheriff; but mightier magnificoes remained behind. The under-sheriff

himself was a sight splendid to behold. Point-lace cravat, embroidered waistcoat, cut-steel buttons, bright-hilted sword, bag-wig, pink silk legs, patent leather shoes, every sumptuary luxury had been bestowed upon him. "Better," I thought, inwardly groaning, "the hooked nose and greasy surt-out of Mr. Rabshekah of Chancery-lane." There was no help. Clearly there was no making a run for it. I gave myself up, with dogged resignation, to Fate, as though the under-sheriff's summons had only been preliminary to the apparition of another municipal functionary on the scene—with the night-cap and the pinioning straps.

There are some people who could have borne this kind of thing with perfect equanimity; nay, who would have found themselves quite at home on this square island of scarlet cloth, in the midst of an ocean of gas and watchful eyes. I don't speak of those who are to the manner born. Of course, the Chancellor of the Exchequer can meet the gaze of the Home Secretary without quailing. The plenipotentiary from the Venezuelan Republic is not afraid of the minister from Honduras, and the Prime Minister is not afraid of anybody. These good folks are upon terms of mutual equality; but, on the other hand, I know several Toms, and Dicks, and Harrys, members, as I am, of the "lower middle classes," who can stand any amount of aristocratic fill without flinching. They like to be among their betters, and so let them know that they, Tom, Dick, and Harry, are there. Observe Tom when, as secretary to the Invalided Rabbit-skin Sellers' Association, he welcomes the Duke of Haresfoot to the annual dinner, at which his grace is to take the chair. He patronises the august nobleman; I saw him once poke the peer in the ribs as his grace was taking his coffee after the banquet. He was telling him a funny story, evidently. Could *you* tell a funny story to a duke? I couldn't. Admire Dick, again, when he meets the Earl of Sablejamb—whom he saw last year at Homburg—when he comes across him in Pall Mall. "Halloa! old fellow," he cries, "what a jolly time of it we had when we last met." Sablejamb, who is as proud as Lucifer, save when he wants to borrow a ten-pound note, tries hard to cross the road; but the unabashed Dick pursues him, shouting out an invitation for my lord to come and dine with him at the Rollicking Rams' Club—a dreadful place, with a nominal subscription, and where they drink beer from the pewter. Marvel at Harry button-holing a bishop—a live

bishop—on the steps of the Athenæum, and holding him in familiar converse, on the strength of having sat next to him at a meeting of the Society for suppressing Indigence by means of the Lash. I say that there are people who can do these things. I aver, candidly, that I cannot; and I thank my stars that I have still nerves and ideas befitting the lowliness of my station, and that I am heartily frightened of the Lord Chancellor. On that memorable Ninth his lordship's golden robe rustled against me; and some of the powder from his ambrosial wig actually came off on my nose. I saw his shoes—his glorious buckled shoes. Hitherto I had only known chancellors from the waist upwards, as we know one of Mr. Attenborough's assistants. I felt faint. Reason tottered on her throne. Was I, by the act of standing on that dais, in contempt of the High Court of Chancery? Should I fling myself at the cancellarian feet and cry, "Mercy. I unfile all my bills; I revoke all my answers; I will consent to the costs being costs in the cause: only forgive and spare me the terrors of the Third Seal?" I am not an eaves-dropper; but from my propinquity I could not choose but hear that the Keeper of the Queen's Conscience was talking to a Justice in Eyre about the weather. Justices in Eyre, bah! they were drugs in this market of splendour. I mentally snapped my fingers at them. The Corps Diplomatique, the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House, the Court of Lieutenancy, and such small deer, I took but little account of. I had touched the wig of the greatest personage in all this realm of England—except the MAYOR.

Ay! there he was, in his golden prime, and at once recalled the legend of the Irreverent being who contemned the worshipful mayor of Frogborough. That landlord who resented the outrage was, after all, in the right. What were chancellors, premiers, ambassadors, bishops, justices in Eyre, and elder brethren of the Trinity House, on this instant Ninth of November in comparison with the mayor of famous London town? I could not help at the same time bringing to mind that drolly exaggerated account of a lord mayor's career given by Theodore Hook in Gilbert Gurney; and that dismally dramatic scene conjured up by the novelist of the ex-lord mayor returning on the night of the expiration of his year of splendour to his drysalter's warehouse in a dingy City lane. All his good fellowship with his majesty's ministers and the foreign ambassadors had come to an end. No more did his wife and daughters dance with princes and nobles.

He had reverted once more to the rank of a mere vulgar Cit; and shortly afterwards, walking on the Steyne at Brighton with his family, he—only a few days since lord mayor, and the entertainer of princes—was horrified at being accosted by a brother tradesman who reminded him that he owed him sundry shillings for a barrel of coal-tar used for painting a pigstye.

When I had gotten over my fright about the dais and the big-wigs upon it, and had walked demurely in the skirts of the procession round the tables of the banquetting-hall—the lovely and accomplished daughter of the civic dignitary to whom I gave my trembling arm little knew how much more in need of her smelling-bottle I was than she could be—when I had got comfortably wedged in my seat at table, between an affable gentleman in a blue coat thickly splashed with gold—I fear that he had something to do with the r-y-l household—and the domestic chaplain of an aldermanic or shrieval grandee; when the view of my neighbours opposite was happily obstructed by a colossal epergne piled high with grapes, and surmounted by a hot-house pine, on which, when the company rose at the bidding of the toast-master, I felt inclined to browse, as a camelopard nibbles at the topmost branches of a tall tree; when the dishes of passing waiters behind me had been accurately dug between my eighth and ninth dorsal vertebrae; when I had heard the Guards' band discoursing sweet music in the gallery; and when in fine the banquet, and the clattering of plates, and the chinking of glasses, and the popping of champagne corks had come to an end, and we had leisure for a little ice and fruit, and quiet chat before the speech-making began, I could not help thinking that the times—so far as civic festivities were concerned—had altered very wonderfully since the days of Theodore Hook. Where were the guttling and guzzling and gormandising one used to hear about as chronic at City banquets? We had, it is true, turtle, both thick and clear; but I heard no squabbles about callipash and callipee, no clamorous demands for green fat; and I observed that an alderman at the next table to mine positively ordered julienne soup and eschewed turtle altogether. My neighbour in the coat splashed with gold dined on the wing of a pheasant and a tumbler of hock-and-seltzer; and to my amazement I perceived that a decanter of port by the side of the domestic chaplain remained wholly untasted throughout the evening. There was no custard, and no

Lord Mayor's fool to jump into it as in the olden time; and I had been taught by attentive study of City traditions that the guests at Guildhall on the Ninth of November ought to "wallow in mustard." There were no sprats. Should not the first sprats of the season be served at the Lord Mayor's table in Guildhall? The loving-cup went round; and the usual expressive pantomime went on among the guests who partook of that famous "drinkhael," but it branched off somehow before it reached me; and I still lack "some one to love," in a parcel-gilt goblet. I looked up to see whether Gog and Magog were still in their old places. Yes; the affable giants were, as usual, on guard: but they were perfectly sober. So were the eight hundred and seventy-two guests beneath them. Everybody sat demurely at table; nobody was under it. People who should have been cracking t'other bottle were trifling with water-ice and wafer-cakes; and shortly after the termination of the Premier's speech, I distinctly heard a common councilman observe to a secondary, that he should like to slip out and get a quiet cigar. A common councilman wishing to smoke! He wore a full beard and moustache also, which increased my astonishment. There were no marrow-bones. There were no peacocks, served with their tails displayed, nor did I see any ruffs and reeves. Vast sirloins of beef were indeed carved with much state and ceremony, in lofty pulpits on either side of the porch of entrance; but the beef was cold. The entire dinner, in fact, save at the upper table, where an elegant repast à la Russe was served, was cold. It might have been a collation given to inaugurate the opening of a new branch of the Dan, Beersheba, and Domdaniel Railway. It much more resembled an elegant and business-like reunion of that nature, than such a revolting display of coarse gluttony and wine-bibbing as is pictured by Hogarth in his Sheriff's Feast plate in Industry and Idleness.

I was quite satisfied, however, after having frugally, but succulently, dined on a plate of turtle, a spoonful of lobster-salad, a preserved greengage, some ice pudding, and several filberts. I had never been in Guildhall before on a festive occasion. The sight to me was a really glorious one; and I delighted in it because it had been my fortune to witness some of the most memorable of the pageantries which have occurred during my time. Yes, I had witnessed very nearly all of them; and, if

not as a guest, at least as a spectator I had watched the pomps and vanities of most of the great ones of the earth—except the Mayor. Having seen him, I may humbly express my opinion that, although his surroundings have somewhat changed, he himself is not in the least altered, but is as powerful and influential a chief magistrate as ever a Whittington or a Gresham has been among his predecessors. The Men in Brass cumber his pageant no more; and his barge is laid up in ordinary. He has ceased to go swan-hopping, and it is a long time since he has shut the gates of Temple Bar in the face of royalty. He might even, perhaps, be able to dispense with Gog and Magog, and the City marshal, and the placid old retainer with the fur porringer on his head; but he would still be the Head of the most ancient, the most charitable, the most hospitable city in the world. I thought, as I wended my way homewards after the dinner, smoking that cigar which the common councilman had longed for, that there might be a good many things in the City of London requiring, if not abolition, at least thorough reform. Perhaps the revenues of the Battledore and Shuttlecock Makers' Company are slightly mismanaged. Perhaps St. Wapshot's Hospital is not quite in the state it should be. Certainly the congregationless City churches should be disestablished. Assuredly St. Paul's-churchyard needs re-arrangement. Indubitably Temple Bar should go by the board. "Revolution may come," I muttered somewhat sleepily alighting from my cab, "revolution may upset most things for aught I care—except the Mayor. He is a better Chief Citizen than any prefect, syndie, burgo-master, or gonfaloniere that I wot of." Whereupon I went to bed, and dreamt of that untasted loving-cup, and that everybody had partaken of it—except the Mayor.

GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S NARRATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THAT STATE OF LIFE," &c

IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IX.

THE course of events during the next four years may be briefly told. As regards my life, and those with which it had hitherto been so closely bound, circumstances had separated us completely. Harry Walbrooke and I scarcely ever met now; and yet he was master of the Grange. The squire was dead; Mrs. Walbrooke and Lena were abroad; and as I never heard from

Mrs. Ridgway of Hapabury, I did not venture to write to her. Thus the links were all severed; and the little I knew of those who had been and were still so dear to me, was by rumour, some faint echo of which penetrated even to my solitude.

The fact is, my poor friend's course was a downward one from the time Assunta married. He became utterly reckless, and led a life of dissipation during the few months he remained with Mr. Strahan, after the morning when I broke the fatal news to him, which divided us further every day. His associates were very distasteful to me; but I would not have shrunk from them, if my joining the parties to which he constantly invited me would have done him any good; but it would not; and as I had to work very hard for my bread at that time, the interruption of labour would have been serious. Then followed that gradual slackening of intimacy which is inevitable when the tenour of one man's life is a silent protest against his friend's. Between him and his uncle the feud remained unhealed, and he never saw the squire again alive. Mr. Walbrooke, who might be said to be still in the prime of life, and whose obstinacy—not to speak of his affection—would have suffered keenly in disinheriting Harry, and so owning himself worsted in the long-sustained contest with his favourite nephew, delayed altering his will from week to week, in the hope that speedy ruin might bring the wretched boy to seek forgiveness. The strong man, in his pride, had no thought of being dispossessed; but one stronger than he came suddenly into his house by night, and in the morning Squire Walbrooke of the Grange lay dead. By a will, dated five years before, all his landed estates passed to Harry, charged with a large jointure to Mrs. Walbrooke, and a certain sum to Lena. And so it came to pass that, in her bitter irony, Fortune cast this ill-deserved gift at Harry's feet—just nine months too late to save him from lifelong ruin and misery. Ah, had Assunta but waited! How cruel it seemed!

The young squire went down and took possession of the Grange, and his connexion with Strahan's of course ceased. But a number of so-called "friends," whom he had made in his short London career, followed him ere long, and every fast man from Oxford, and every needy sportsman in the county, who wanted a good mount and cared for a good bottle of claret, found his way to the Grange. In such company I should have been very much out of

place; these men and I had no one idea in common, and to witness their orgies, and to see foolish, generous-hearted Harry allowing his substance to be devoured by these vultures would have only made me angry. I refused all his pressing invitations. "If you ever are alone, and want me, I will come to you," I said, "but not when your army of swashbucklers is with you—don't ask me." And he did not after a while. I heard of him, alas! from time to time, and what I heard was as bad as it could well be. The life at the Grange was a scandal to the whole county; it was said that there was scarcely a night that the young squire went to bed sober, and even once in the hunting-field he had been in a condition which necessitated his being taken home. His uncle's old friends (particularly those who had marriageable daughters) bore with this state of things as long as it was possible; but when every effort to lure him into the decent, if dull, society of the neighbourhood proved abortive, they gave him up; it was felt to be impossible for steady old fathers of families to continue going to the Grange.

Harry and Assunta had never met, nor were they likely to do so, though living only twenty-five miles apart; inasmuch as Mrs. Ridgway, of Hapsbury, it was said, never went outside the park gates, and within them the young squire had, of course, never set foot. His animosity against Mr. Ridgway was well known, and broke out on the mere mention of that gentleman's name into the bitterest scoffs; but of the lady he was never known to speak. Rumours of the life she led I suppose must have reached him; he must have heard of her through Lena, who corresponded with her friend from time to time. But these letters would have told him little of the truth, as he must have known; and it is certain that, from the moment he heard of her marriage, he ceased to try and hold any sort of communication with the object of his unhappy passion. Perhaps I was the only person in the world who guessed that he had not forgotten her; and that he vainly imagined the life of violent exercise and moral excess would act as a styptic to the wound which still bled when it was touched. Not that he ever spoke to me of her, even in the early days of wrath and bitterness; indeed, he expressly begged me never to allude to the past, or to anything that should remind him of his loss.

It only remains for me to add, before I take up the thread of my narrative again, that, in spite of constant and anxious en-

deavours to learn all I possibly could of Mrs. Ridgway, the information I gained was but meagre. Mr. Ridgway and his wife led a very secluded life. They had no children. Mrs. Ridgway was not supposed to be a happy woman; but very little seemed to be known about her. Mr. Ridgway discouraged intimacy with any neighbours. At certain stated intervals he received them all with sumptuous courtesy (I believe it would be a misuse of the word to call it hospitality); for, since his marriage, most of those who had kept aloof from him, had come forward, and for the sake of the young wife were disposed to forget any sinister rumours regarding the husband. But it was as though he said, "Now that I have conquered these people, they shall see that I care nothing for their society. They receive me; they come to my house; it is enough." He declined all invitations. A few savants, dilettanti, and stray foreigners of various kinds, stayed at Hapsbury from time to time; and sometimes the magnates of those parts were bidden to meet them. This, as far as I could gather, was the only intercourse between Mr. and Mrs. Ridgway and their neighbours.

It chanced in the February of 1831 that I had occasion to make a journey to Peterborough on professional business. During my stay there, I learnt that the day coach from that city to York passed within a few miles of Hapsbury, which was not more than forty miles from Peterborough. My business concluded, I was in no special hurry to return home, and a temptation, which will sound strange to many, urged me, now I was so near, to go on to Hapsbury, or at least into its immediate vicinity, and learn what I could of my poor Assunta, even if I was unable to see her, for I had been given to understand that Mrs. Ridgway was generally denied to morning visitors. Acting upon this impulse, which I found irresistible, I took my place in the coach one morning, and was at the small town of L. early in the afternoon. From there, with a knapsack on my back, I walked over to the village of Hapsbury, some six miles distant. There had been a long drought, and the road was as deep in limestone dust as though it had been summer, the result of which was that my old painting-blouse and cap, my hair, eyelashes, every part of my outward man, was thickly powdered over, and I resembled nothing so much as an indigent baker or bricklayer out of work. In fact, one charitably-minded old gentleman on a cob did actually throw me sixpence, for which

I touched my cap, thinking it would only distress him, and check the stream of his benevolence towards the next wayfarer, if I explained his error. So much to account for the fact that when I entered the tap-room of the little public at Hapsbury, and found three men over their pipes and beer, two of whom were unmistakably tramps, the third a boosy labourer, they viewed me without suspicion, and continued to discourse freely, as before one of their own caste. The tramps were bound for Nottingham, Hapsbury lying on the high road, I found, between that city and L., which I had just left. The discussion, as I entered, was as to the relative excellence of various roads. At first I understood this to refer to their paving, which in some parts of the country is but bad walking. It was, however, as I soon learnt, the moral rather than the physical aspect of the king's highway, which the worthy couple had under consideration.

"Nottingham to Leicester's a better road nor this. I left ten crosses and three double crosses behind me the last time as I done that 'ere road," said one speaker, looking round with an air of satisfaction, not unmixed with pride.

"Besides dots?" asked the other.

"Besides dots. They're the softest 'earted lot you ever see. It's true that this 'ere way, there's one 'ouse as is always good for five crosses."

"What do that mean?" asked the boosy labourer, taking the pipe from his mouth, his leaden eye lighted up with a gleam of curiosity.

"Why, every cross is a tizzy, to be sure, and a tizzy's a sixpence, if you don't know," said the first speaker, with an air of profound contempt for bucolic ignorance.

"And what's dots?"

"Dots is brownies, as we call 'em sometimes, that's pence. We don't make much account how a road as 'as got nothin' but dots along the palin's. Now this 'ere lady's one o' the right sort, poor thing. I s'pose she's kep' in a kind o' prison, for scores and scores o' times as I come this way, she's al'ays at that same winder, and she's always good for 'alf-a-crown. Indeed, for any chap as 'as a squaller——"

"What's a squaller?" said the rustic, resolved to satisfy his legitimate thirst for information, regardless of the traveller's scorn.

"Why, bless your 'eart, a squaller's a brat as squalls, to be sure. I might ha'

bought Mary Hanne's squaller for ten bob, and wery good interest it'd ha' paid me for my money. This 'ere good lady al'ays gives five bob to a squaller, they tells me. I s'pose she's never a child of 'er own, eh?"

"Noa." Here the fellow scratched his head, and added, after a pause, "she's be a loanesome life, folks say; but the squoire be foine and rich, any ways. Eh, but money be a foine thing."

"And be 'im as charitable as 'er?" asked the second tramp; and turning to his fellow-labourer, he murmured something in a low voice, of which I only caught the words, "distressed hoperatives." But the spark of cupidity, if kindled, was quickly extinguished.

"Noa, noa. You'll not be gettin' the blind side o' th' squoire. It be th' missis as be for the givin'. He be all for argyfyng; and when he lost his trile 'gain th' village, 'bout th' path, he were that riled, he never give us nothin' no moure. They tells me as th' parson's tried to stan' up again him for t' argyfy, but it warn't no good; he wouldn't give a ha'porth to th' school along o' that 'ere path."

This was a dark saying to me, and as the conversation changed soon after, I took advantage of the landlord's entry to ask for a bedroom, and to order some dinner. But as I saw from his face that my appearance did not inspire him with much confidence (which was what I wanted, at that moment, more even than the bed or dinner), I followed him into the passage, and taking some money from my pocket, I showed it him, and said:

"Though I wear a shabby coat, I will pay my way—don't be afraid."

And upon mine host protesting that nothing was further from his thoughts, we drifted into an amicable discourse, which I led gradually to the subject of Squire Ridgway and "his lady." I learnt that the state of feeling between the squire and his village was anything but pleasant, owing to a right of way across his park, which he had vainly endeavoured to stop up. This path led directly under the window of Mrs. Ridgway's boudoir, and was a poisoned thorn in the side of the exclusive "man of taste." Mine host was of opinion that to the pale, lonely lady, sitting for ever at her window, and debarred, by the existing feud, from even visiting the poor, the sight of the labourer, plodding homewards after his day's work, of the rosy milk-maid, laden with the spoil of the heavy-uddered kine, of even the foot-sore tramp,

trailing his weary steps through the cool grass, with a sense of thankfulness after the hot flinty road, were pleasant breaks in the monotony of her day, which she would have been sorry to lose. But however this might be, Mr. Ridgway, with that smooth implacability (which I knew so well), had never forgiven the obstinate resistance which the village had made to the infringement of their right. From that day Mr. Ridgway declined to do anything further for the poor, for the school, or for the church; he forbade his wife's going into the village; he cut off his establishment, as far as practicable, from all communication with his humbler neighbours, as he discouraged it with the richer ones, and all this he did deliberately, without heat, or visible expression of anger. The parish had tried conclusions with him, he said to the good vicar militant, who returned to the charge repeatedly; he, Mr. Ridgway, was a man of peace, and they had desired war; they had made their election—it was well; he had nothing more to say to them. And from this ultimatum nothing would move him.

What I had heard, both in the tap-room and from the landlord, gave me plenty to think of that night. I made up my mind that I would not leave the neighbourhood till I had seen and spoken to Assunta; but how was this to be managed? Mine host had given me to understand that, unless Mr. Ridgway was in the humour to receive company, the doors were shut against every visitor to his wife. I resolved to reconnoitre the ground before making any attempt, and early in the forenoon of the following day I started to walk across the park by the public path in question. On approaching the stately Italian palace, with its sky-line of marble balustrade, broken by busts and urns, I pulled my cap further over my face, and, disguising my gait with a stoop and a limp, I crept slowly past the angle of the house, in which was the window which had been described to me. On the other side of the path was a broad sheet of water, upon which this window consequently looked, and just beyond it came the great portico and flight of steps. The gardens, terraces, and fountains were all on the other side of the house. I looked up at the window, there was no one to be seen; I lingered, I looked back, and then I turned and walked past it again. At last I bethought me of my sketch-book, and, taking it out, I turned my back to the house, and facing the water, with the chestnut-wood behind

it, and the soft line of hills in the distance, I made a few random strokes, hoping that she I sought might be attracted presently to the window. I had not stood thus five minutes when I heard a step upon the gravel behind me, and, turning, I saw a powdered footman approaching. "It is all up now," I thought; "I am going to be warned that, though there is a right of way, there is no right of standing to sketch in front of the house." And I shut my book. Imagine my surprise when the servant thus addressed me:

"Mr. Ridgway has sent me to ask, sir, if your name is not Luttrell? If so, he hopes you will walk in."

I never felt more confused. Of course I acceded; but when I reflected upon my appearance, and remembered how I had limped and slouched, and that the lynx-eyed master here had detected me from his window under this masquerade, I confess I was ashamed of meeting him. My only course was boldness, and a statement of such portion of the truth as I could tell. My conductor led me through the great hall, with its marble pavement, and busts of the Roman emperors along the walls, into a small morning-room, hung entirely with rare engravings in narrow black frames. A table, with a Sèvres chocolate service on it, stood near the fire, and before it, sipping his breakfast, in a black quilted satin dressing-gown, stood the master of the house. The window, through which he had seen me, was in front of him, as he stood with his back to the fireplace, and to his right was a door leading into the library. He looked as young as ever, and, with that silver-electro-plated smile of his, held out two fingers, saying:

"Ben venuto, Signor Pitlore. By a curious coincidence you were in my thoughts five minutes before I saw you out of the window. What brings you to our fens? Not a study of the picturesque, I imagine?"

"I am on a short walking tour, having left my heavy luggage at L. I was debating in my mind whether I could venture to present myself here, in this mendicant's guise, Mr. Ridgway, when——"

"Never mind, my dear sir. I hate explanations, don't you? They never explain anything. I am very glad to see you, no matter what may have brought you here—you are the very man I want. You have arrived very opportunely to give me a piece of advice; but, first, will you have some breakfast? There are lobster cut-

lets, and *pâté de foie gras*," said he, taking up a slip of paper on the breakfast tray, and then added with a laugh, "Not that I often eat anything myself at this hour, but their existence is thus notified to me."

I said I had breakfasted three hours since; and then I asked for Mrs. Ridgway. She was well, he replied, and reverted at once to the subject which was evidently uppermost in his mind. He had purchased a ceiling, by Giulio Romano, out of a palace at Genoa, and it had lately arrived at Hapsbury. It had received some damage in the transit. Whether to have it retouched and varnished before it was put up, or wait to see the effect when it was up, and how much restoration would be needed, were points on which he wished for professional advice. My careful studies for years in our National Gallery, and the attention I had bestowed upon such subjects, rendered me competent to give an opinion; and I followed Mr. Ridgway into the crimson saloon, where the canvas representing the Fall of Phaeton was stretched upon the floor. The result of the examination and discussion that ensued was all that I need here repeat. In my judgment, the less the picture was touched the better, and the very small amount of reparation requisite, I believed I could do myself, as well as, and without the risk of, its being subjected to another journey to London. Mr. Ridgway was delighted; it was just what he wished, and I, of course, very gladly acceded to his invitation to remain at Hapsbury until the work was completed. A dog-cart was sent over to L. for my things, and in the course of a couple of hours I found myself, to my astonishment, regularly installed in the house, to effect an entry into which, that morning, had seemed to me a matter of some difficulty. Still, I did not see its mistress. Mr. Ridgway remained with me, and conversed brilliantly, but he never alluded to his wife, and when at last I asked point blank if I might be allowed to pay my respects to Mrs. Ridgway, he only replied, "Oh, you will see her by-and-bye." In the course of conversation I ventured to say that I heard he led a very secluded life, rarely admitting visitors.

"Are you surprised that I do not choose to be bored by all the idiots of a neighbourhood like this, where there is not a man who cares for anything but riding after a wretched little animal, with a pack of hounds?" was his rejoinder. "I am glad to see any man of cultivation, other-

wise I prefer my own society, and that of my books. In them, I daily make acquaintances far pleasanter than any I find about here."

Not a word about his wife. I could not keep silence. "And Mrs. Ridgway. Does not she find it lonely without any society?"

"I do not understand any one but a fool feeling lonely," he said, in rather a freezing tone. "Mrs. Ridgway is a person of cultivation. She has her books and her music. The visits of a set of gossiping women could not—ought not—to be any pleasure to her. Silence is better for her than to listen to evil speaking, lying, and slandering, which is what the ladies of England indulge in during their morning visits."

After this it was clear to me that the gossip of the county was in some measure the cause (but in what way I could not then perceive) of the existing state of things at Hapsbury. Mr. Ridgway had gained all he had wanted; the county had flocked to his house; how could its idle tongues affect him now?

"Does Mrs. Ridgway take any interest in your poorer neighbours?" I asked, presently, anxious to elicit something from my host on this head.

"I have been obliged to interdict all that sentimental visiting of cottages which has lately come into fashion among fine ladies," was his reply. "The poor here are an ignorant, obstinate race. I have washed my hands of them some time ago. Any pettifogging lawyer, or low radical parson, who will talk to them of their rights, can twist them round his finger. As Butler says:

And what they're confidently told,
By no sense else can be contr'ld.

They were advised to resist me, and I hope they value the advice now," he added, with a smile. I said no more.

The day closed in, and the dressing-gong for dinner sounded. I hurried down to the Spanish drawing-room, that famed apartment hung with Cordova leather, and adorned with some of the masterpieces of Velasquez and Murillo, and there, as I had hoped, I found Assunta, and alone. But oh, how changed! Nothing remained of the Assunta whom I remembered but the eyes, and they were larger, more intense, than ever. Those burning orbs in their deep blue hollows, the shrunken cheek, the bloodless lips, all gave me the impression of some inward fire consuming the frail lamp that held it. Her fingers seemed almost transparent, as I took the hand she ex-

tended and pressed it respectfully to my lips. She was magnificently dressed in a velvet robe, trimmed with fur, after the fashion of that day, against which the yellow white of her face and hands came out in yet more ghastly contrast. She evidently knew of my being in the house, for she manifested no surprise at seeing me; she was very calm, very silent; but a faint smile flickered on her face as I took her hand, and then it died out to reappear no more. As to myself, I could not speak. Though I had looked forward to this meeting so long, though I knew I should find her sadly changed, the sight of her affected me so painfully that I dared not trust my own voice. It was she who broke the silence.

"I am glad to see you again. I never expected to do so. It seems a long, long time since we met—much longer than it really is."

"I have so often wished to hear from you," I at last found voice to say.

"Ah, I never write to any one now!"

"Not even to Lena?"

"Not even to Lena."

"And why not? Why cut yourself off from all communication with friends who love you so truly?"

She paused a moment or two, deliberating, as it seemed to me, whether she should give the real reason. Then she said quietly:

"Because I have nothing to tell."

There was a chilling silence.

"And Mrs. Fleming and the children—do you never hear from them?"

"They write when they want anything, and Mr. Ridgway sends it."

She said this impassively, without a touch of bitterness, or even of regret. It was as though the springs of feeling were all frozen; and I saw that it would take long to thaw them. Mr. Ridgway entered, his well-turned legs displayed in small-clothes and silk stockings, which were then still worn by a few men; fragrant, and polished as ivory and ebony from head to foot. I fancied that he gave a quick, penetrating glance at Assunta; but he came forward without any embarrassment of manner, and from that moment to the hour of our retiring to rest, he kept up a constant fire of anecdote and quotation, happily needing but little assistance from me. He never addressed his wife, except to ask what she would take (those were the good old days of carving at table), and unless I spoke to her she remained absolutely silent. I appealed to her for an opinion whenever it was possible, in the hope of drawing her

gradually into the conversation, but it was in vain; she sat there like a figure carved in stone, that by some mechanism is made to utter a monosyllable from time to time, and that is all. Nothing that was said awoke a smile, or any sign of interest on her face; and as soon as the dessert was set upon the table, she rose slowly and left the room. We sat late over our wine, for my host showed no inclination to return to the drawing-room, and I, who was impatient to return to Assunta, could not of course suggest a move. We found her sitting by the fire. I can see her now, the ruddy light upon her velvet dress, a fan of peacock's feathers in her hand, and the golden gloom of the Spanish leather background and richly carved frames. She did not turn her head, she did not move. There was something very terrible in this apathy. When the clock struck half-past ten she got up and took a small Roman lamp from the table. Then she held out her hand and turned towards the door. Mr. Ridgway gracefully sauntered up, and held it open for his wife.

"Good-night, Assunta."

"Good-night."

There was no kiss, no touch of any kind. She looked neither to the right nor to the left, but passed out, and the door closed behind her.

As soon as we were alone I observed a change in Mr. Ridgway. He was silent for certainly two or three minutes, passing his white hand to and fro across his chin, as he stared into the fire. Suddenly he looked up into my face, and with an expression upon his own so complicated that I found it impossible to read it, he said:

"You have not seen Mrs. Ridgway for some time. How do you think her looking?"

"Very ill. Sadly changed, if you ask me, Mr. Ridgway."

"Did she say anything to you before dinner?—before I came into the room?"

I returned his gaze steadily. "Very little."

"You observe that she is generally taciturn. But at times this is not the case. You are right, she is ill, Mr. Luttrell, and her malady is one which I fear is incurable. You are an old friend of hers, and you are now my guest for the next week at least. It is possible that in the course of that time Mrs. Ridgway may speak to you in a manner which renders it advisable that you should be prepared to receive what she says by a knowledge of her condition. Her

mind has lost its balance, and at moments she may be said to be absolutely insane."

I was speechless with horror and indignation. I did not believe what he said, though it at once flashed through my mind how plausible the tale might be made to look. I felt, however, the absolute necessity of mastering my emotion and concealing my real sentiments, if I wished to be of service to my unhappy friend; and, fortunately, I had sufficient self-command to let my face betray nothing. After a moment's pause, he continued:

"She has happily never needed restraint. She is free to do what she likes, subject to certain restrictions, especially in the matter of receiving visitors alone. Her hallucinations have been such, and her speech so wild at times, that some precaution of this kind was necessary. But the servants have no idea of the truth. It is looked upon as my eccentricity."

"What medical advice have you had?" I asked.

"Doctor L. came from London expressly, when my suspicions were first aroused. He said the case was not an uncommon one of monomania. He held out very little hope of recovery, but said that her state might continue like this for years."

Here was chapter and verse. I was a little staggered, but I knew a brother of Doctor L.'s, and I resolved to test, at all events, the truth of his alleged visit. I said presently: "Did Doctor L. think a life of such absolute seclusion good for a person in this sad condition?"

"She must, above all, be subjected to no excitement. I have occasionally a friend or two to stay with me, when she is generally much as you saw her to-night. The last large party I had was about a year ago. I found it did her more harm than good. She talked very wildly to one of the ladies, who happened to name that wretched sot, young Walbrooke. After that, I determined to have no more parties."

"Have you ever communicated with her—her friends?"

"She has no family, as you know. Mrs. Walbrooke has been abroad for the last three years. I wrote to that poor creature Mrs. Fleming, to say that Assunta was in a highly nervous state, and unable to see her, and that, I thought, was sufficient. A woman like Mrs. Fleming would do her infinitely more harm than good."

"I fear, from your report," I said, dryly, "that nothing can do Mrs. Ridgway any good. On what subject, may I ask, do you consider that she is a monomaniac?"

"Chiefly on the subject of myself; but everything relating to the past, to the time when she lived at the Grange, is sure to excite her. As your acquaintance with Mrs. Ridgway belongs to that date, Mr. Luttrell, I hope you will be cautious, in any intercourse you may have with her, not to refer to that time. I may rely on you?"

"Mr. Ridgway, you may rely on my doing nothing to injure my poor friend, in whose sad case I feel the deepest interest."

He talked for some time longer on the same topic, and in the same strain. There was no affectation of deep feeling; it was the dispassionate tone of a philosopher, who does his best, under existing circumstances, and has made up his mind to every eventuality. And then we parted for the night. To me, I need hardly say, it was a sleepless one. So wretched an evening as that I had never passed. I lay awake, revolving in my mind how I might arrive at the truth in this affair, and, if it were possible, help this dear, unhappy lady. And in the morning I wrote (and posted with my own hand) the following note:

Hapsbury, Lincolnshire, March 5th.

DEAR L.,—Do me a great favour. Ask your brother whether he came down to the above address, eighteen months ago, to give an opinion on Mrs. Ridgway's case, and (if it be no breach of professional etiquette) what did he consider her ailment to be at that time? You will confer a lasting obligation on me if you can send me answers to these questions by return of post.

Yours, ever most faithfully,
GEOFFREY LUTTRELL.

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"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

NO. 158. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1871.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER II. CONFRONTED.

THE room into which Madge was shown was a good specimen of that apartment which is called the "library," and which is to be found in the houses of all mushroom men of means, though the use to which it is put is extremely limited. There was a large and very handsome bookcase in polished mahogany, with plate-glass doors, filled with standard works, gorgeously bound and symmetrically arranged. The latest edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica was not too heavy, the newest high-priced novel was not too light, for the taste of the bookseller, to whom the charge of furnishing this collection had been committed. Mr. Kaulbach, the Anglicised German Jew, to whom the villa belonged, knew nothing of literature, but he bought his books as he bought his wines, horses, pictures, furniture, and other articles of luxury, from the man with the best name in the trade, and as he paid a good price, concluded he had been supplied with a good article. There was a large writing-table, also of mahogany, with a blue morocco leather top, guiltless of scratch or stain, an inkstand holding, on a moderate calculation, half a pint of ink, a sheaf of quill pens, and a stand of pen-holders of all kinds, odd little nick-nacks for holding matches and wax, silver owls with red glass eyes, gilt dogs' heads for paper-weights, gilt ducks' heads with opening bills for letter-clips, and underneath the table, and by the side of the heavy oak chair, a dainty little basket, presumably intended for waste paper. It was altogether a place

for show rather than use, and not one where anything like real work could be done. Mr. Kaulbach never proposed to himself to do any work in it. All his writing was carried on in a dingy little office, in a black little square out of Mincing-lane, on a high-shouldered, hacked, and ink-blotched desk, where he scrawled his cramped memoranda and smears calculations, with the aid of a leaden inkstand and a corroded pen.

Madge looked about her with interest. Assuredly Philip Vane must have progressed in the world, as his present quarters were infinitely better than any which he had inhabited during her acquaintance with him. She had a kind of idea that Mr. Drage's notion might be correct, and that both Philip Vane and the lady, his engagement to whom had been publicly announced, were staying at the same country house together, and in another minute she would see him. He would be called away from the side of the rich prize he had recently won, to the presence of the woman whom he had so basely deserted. How would he bear the meeting, she wondered. He would be savage when he saw her, more savage when he knew the purpose for which she had come. As yet he had never struck her. Oftentimes, in the old days, she had thought that she could better have borne a blow from his hand than the scathing bitterness of his tongue; but that was long ago, when she was younger and stronger. Now she began to tremble at the mere thought of personal violence. She wished she had allowed Mr. Drage to accompany her; his presence would at least have prevented Philip Vane from indulging in any excessive outburst of wrath. The servants were moving about in the hall, and the doors of the room where the company were still evidently assembled at dinner were

open; that was a point in her favour Madge thought; from a sheer sense of decency Philip Vane would be compelled to put some curb upon his rage.

Who would he imagine was his visitor? The name which Madge had given to the servant was hers by right, but she had never used it, and so long and so completely had they been estranged that her husband would probably not think of her in connexion with it. Upon that utter oblivion of her, or, if that were wanting, upon his fear of creating a disturbance in his friend's house, Madge relied for her interview with her husband. The seeking of that interview was voluntary on her part, had not been decided upon until after full consideration and discussion, and must be gone through with now, even when she heard his step approaching the door.

Not his footstep after all, but, by its lightness and its fleetness, a woman's. Next moment the door opened and a woman entered the room. A woman of middle height, but full and rounded figure, set off with flowing draperies and clouds of delicate lace. Queenly in her walk and movements, and of a flashing and disdainful beauty, with large liquid dark eyes, clear cut aquiline profile, mouth undoubtedly small, but yet with full and sensuous lips, and a mass of lustrous black hair twisted into a coronet on her head. She swept into the room arranging the train of her dress with one hand, and with the other motioning to Madge, who had risen, to resume her chair.

"Pray be seated," said the lady, with a pleasant smile, and in a rich full voice; "you asked to see Mr. Vane, I believe?"

"I—I did," said Madge, nervous with surprise, and with her intuition of the identity of the person addressing her.

There was a singular contrast between these women. Madge pale as death, neatly, almost primly, dressed, nervous and ill at ease; the other with a glowing complexion, richly and tastefully attired, and perfectly self-composed.

"I am sorry," she said, "that you should have been misled by the stupid blunder of a servant. You were told that Mr. Vane was stopping in this house, but the fact is that he left here yesterday morning, having been summoned away by a telegram on business of importance."

"Is this true?" said Madge, half involuntarily.

The lady started and looked amazed, but said nothing.

"I beg your pardon," said Madge, "I

did not mean to say that, I had no right to say it. Will Mr. Vane be long away?"

"I cannot say," said the lady, in an altered tone; "nor can I continue to hold a conversation with one who is a perfect stranger to me! Perhaps," she continued, rising, "perhaps you will leave your card, that Mr. Vane may have it on his return?"

"I have no card," said Madge, firmly, "but I gave my name to the servant, who showed me into this room."

"The man made a worse blunder than when he told you that Mr. Vane was staying here," said the lady, with curling lip, "for he announced you as Mrs. Vane."

"He delivered his message correctly in that instance, at least," said Madge, "for that was the name I gave him."

"You are a connexion of Mr. Vane's, I suppose?"

"I am."

"May I ask what connexion?"

"I am Philip Vane's wife."

Madge had steadied her voice for this announcement, and spoke very quietly, without the smallest trace of theatrical intonation, without the slightest gesture, each word clipping clearly and distinctly out of her lips.

The words thus quietly pronounced were not, however, without their effect; the lady who heard them seemed to reel, and leaned against the mantelpiece, before which she had been standing. For an instant she looked across at Madge dreamily, and with dazed eyes, repeating the words she had heard in a thick, low tone, "His wife did you say; Philip Vane's wife?"

"I am Philip Vane's wife," repeated Madge, in the same clear, merciless tone. "You, I conclude, are Mrs. Bendixen, the lady to whom, as the newspapers announced, my husband is about to be married. I am sorry," continued Madge, changing her tone, "to be compelled to interfere with your intended arrangements, but you will see that the step which you contemplated is impossible. I am Mrs. Philip Vane, and however poor my opinion may be of that position, I intend to claim and hold it for my own."

As she spoke she drew herself up, stamped her foot, and threw out her hand with a gesture which was familiar to her, and at which Philip Vane had so often sneered. There was defiance in that action, defiance in her kindling eyes, defiance in her ringing voice. Mrs. Bendixen, now thoroughly roused, leaned forward, looking eagerly at her visitor, but she had miscalculated the nature of the woman with whom she had

to deal, for she said, half querulously, half fiercely:

"How dare you speak to me in this way! How dare you come into my presence! I know what the world is, and what sort of lives men lead, and I dare say you have been accustomed to call yourself Mrs. Vane, and imagine you have a kind of right to do so; but of course there must be an end of that now. What do you look at me for in that way? Do you mean to say that you don't understand me?"

"I mean to say," said Madge, who had lapsed into stone again, and sat with her steady, cold, pitiless gaze on the other woman's face, "I mean to say you are talking in riddles, and that if you want me to comprehend you, you must speak more plainly."

"Then I tell you," said Mrs. Bendixen, in a loud and shrill tone, which she moderated, when she recollected the proximity of the hall, where the servants were still engaged—"then I tell you that I dare say you may have called yourself Mrs. Vane, because you were Mr.—Mr. Vane's mistress; that he gave you money, and perhaps kept a house for you, and—and was fond of you! I know such things go on, but," she added, the colour rising in her cheeks, and her eyes flashing, "there must be an end to all that! You have doubtless come here to ask for money? If so, you shall have it. I will take care of that, but you must not see Mr. Vane again, nor talk of yourself as his wife. You must not repeat that wicked lie!"

She paused and leaned forward eagerly to see the effect which her words had created. There was anxiety in her eyes, in the manner with which from time to time she moistened her lips, in the irrepressible fluttering motion of the hands which lay in her lap before her. By her words she had tried to impress on her visitor her own conviction of the truth of her statement; but her look and her involuntary action had the opposite effect.

"What I have said," said Madge, still holding her with her eyes, "is no lie, but God's truth! The lies which have been told you in this matter have come from him, not from me! I am Philip Vane's lawful wife! Of that fact I can give you proofs—but there is no need of that," she said, changing her tone, "I see, you know it now, as you listen to me. Look at me! If you really have such a knowledge of the world as you profess, you will recognise at once that I am not of the stuff of which mistresses are made—I am Philip Vane's wife! Do you believe me?"

"I—I almost fear I do," said Mrs. Bendixen, still bending forward in her chair, and gazing at the pale, grave face and neat figure before her.

"It matters little to me whether you do or do not," said Madge, with a slight curl of her lip, "the fact remains, and can be proved at any moment. Now listen to me! When you tried to persuade yourself that my assertion was a lie, and that I was—what you said—you pretended to think that I had come here for money. What do you think, now, is the motive of my visit?"

"I—cannot tell," stammered Mrs. Bendixen, "unless it is revenge. You seem a dreadfully determined woman."

"Do I?" said Madge, as the faint glimmer of a contemptuous smile passed across her face. "I do not think that I am dreadfully determined; I am perfectly sure that I have no desire for revenge. Revenge on whom? On you? You have been passive in this matter; your part has been merely that of the dupe! On Philip Vane? One cannot be revenged on the dead, and Philip Vane is as dead to me as if I had seen him in his shroud."

"Oh, don't talk in that dreadful manner," cried Mrs. Bendixen, with a moan, then covering her face with her hands, she added, "Oh, what do you want? why did you come here?"

"To save you from a worse fate even than that which has befallen me. Not that I care for you one straw; you are nothing to me, as he is nothing to me, and, so far as I am concerned, you might both of you have gone on your way unchecked and unwarned, but I do not choose to see this crime committed where I have the power of stopping it, and if it be stopped, Philip Vane will have his vanity to thank, and nothing else. That vanity is overweening; it led him to make public his conquest. He announced in the newspapers that he was engaged to be married to you, and thus I heard of it."

"I don't see what there was to induce Mr. Vane to put it in the newspapers!" moaned Mrs. Bendixen.

"Don't you?" said Madge. "I do. Your name, your position, and your attractions are well known in the world to which Philip Vane now belongs, and the fact of having secured them would tell undoubtedly in his favour. He meant to marry you as he had previously married me, for the sake of living upon you. But his last marriage would have proved infinitely more successful than his first. You were something to win; your beauty is self-

evident, your wealth and position generally acknowledged. When he married me, I was a poor actress in a country theatre, with sufficient good looks to win his eye, and a sufficient salary to keep him in tolerable comfort. They must have been poor enough, my appearance and my earnings, for when he had once possessed himself of both they had not enough attraction to induce him to acknowledge me as his wife, and so soon as he saw his way to effectually ridding himself, he deserted me: the ladder had served its purpose, he could afford to kick it down."

"I am sure you judge Mr. Vane most unjustly," said Mrs. Bendixen, raising her face from her hands. "He is the most generous of men. His affection for me is quite disinterested, and it is too, too cruel to speak of him in this way."

"When you have known him as long as I have known him, I will ask you for your verdict on his character," said Madge, quietly; "not that I expect that even then you would say of him what I say, for you would not have the cause."

"You allow that," cried Mrs. Bendixen; "that shows that he was not entirely to blame."

"It shows simply that you from your plenty can give him all he longs for, wealth, ease, luxury, the position in the eyes both of men and women to which he has aspired; while I from my poverty could only fend off hunger and cold, could only bar the door against the wolf, could only find the platform whence he should spring into competence, leaving me behind him. He deserted me because I could do so little, he will hold to you since you can do so much."

"And he shall hold to me," cried Mrs. Bendixen, springing to her feet; "your last words have thoroughly determined me. See here, woman. I believe all you say. There is something in your voice, in your manner, which prevents my disbelieving it, much as I wish to do so. But I tell you I love Philip Vane, love him with a fervour which you, with your pale puny passion, cannot for an instant imagine. He has become essential to my life, and I have never yet known what it was to have one aspiration checked, one wish thwarted. I have been married before, you know that. The man who took me from a boarding-school to be his wife gave me all that I then thought the world contained, power, riches, admiration. But it was not until after his death, it was not until I met Mr. Vane, that I knew the happiness of loving and being loved. Ah, do not take that happiness

from me; do not, I implore you, dissipate that dream! You speak of yourself as one to whom the pleasures of life are at an end, but in your time you have enjoyed that greatest joy of all. Why then grudge it to me?"

"You are talking at random," said Madge, coldly, "and I am unable to follow you. What influence can I have over your future beyond pointing out to you the impossibility of the course you propose to yourself to pursue? What would you wish me to do?"

"To go away, anywhere, in any country, to hide yourself, and never to come near me again. The good luck which has attended me throughout my lifetime has prevented your seeing Mr. Vane to-day. The dreadful secret which you have just uttered is known to us alone. It must never go further, nay, more than that, he must never know that I am aware of its existence, never be reminded of it himself. I will buy it of you at what price you like. You have only to name the sum and it is yours."

"Supposing I were to do as you ask, how would your position be improved? You, with the gratified desires, and the unchecked wishes of which you have boasted, have purchased Philip Vane's love, or what is equivalent to it, and now wish to purchase my silence! Suppose I agree, how is your position improved? The world will believe you to be Philip Vane's wife, but you will know yourself—"

"Do you think I care what the world thinks of me or what I think of myself?" cried Mrs. Bendixen. "I tell you I love this man, and that I will not have him taken from me. Have you no understanding, have you no compassion?"

"I have no patience to listen to ravings which would be wearisome from a love-sick girl, but which are contemptible in a woman. I did not seek to be Philip Vane's judge, but fate seems to have appointed me to be his executioner. I have given you due warning, and I absolve myself if you choose to share his fate. Now let me pass. I will leave this place."

And she rose and dropped her veil, and drew her mantle round her.

"Stay!" said Mrs. Bendixen. "You must not leave in this manner. You have said that you care no longer for Philip Vane; that you regard him as dead to you; and yet you will not leave him to me! Ah, spare him, I implore you! I have looked forward so eagerly to the time when I should be his wife. I have reckoned so upon giving to him a love

which no one hitherto has been able to evoke, that if he is torn from me I shall go mad. Oh, see me at your feet and spare me!"

As she uttered these words she dropped from her chair on to her knees, and lifted her hands in supplication. The large tears welled into her upturned eyes, and her hair, which had become unfastened, hung about her pale face.

"It is a pretty picture," said Madge, dreamily, looking down on the woman at her feet, "and devotion such as this is certainly thrown away on its object. Come, madam!" she cried, "rouse yourself, and let us put an end to this scene. You ask me to let your marriage with my husband take place without opposition; even if I would, I am powerless to do so. The secret is not mine alone, but is in the keeping of those who have a greater regard for my position than I have myself, and who are determined that it shall not be thus wantonly outraged."

"You are implacable, then?" said Mrs. Bendixen, rising and throwing back her hair.

"I am merely indifferent," said Madge, coldly. "As indifferent to your fate as to his. I came here to warn him of the consequences of the act which he contemplated, and I found you in his place. In those consequences you are equally interested, and my warning has been given to you. My duty is done. Let me pass!"

"One moment yet," cried Mrs. Bendixen. "Will the fact that you have given this warning to me content you? Will you swear that you will seek no further opportunity of letting him know your intentions towards him?"

"I see your meaning now," said Madge, looking straight at her with cold unsparing eyes. "Your passion for this man has so demented you, that you will hurry on this marriage, which will be no marriage, and accept yourself the position which you imputed to me at the commencement of our interview. Is not that so?"

"I do not deny it," said Mrs. Bendixen, excitedly. "I have set my mind upon it, and I will carry it through. I should glory in——"

"You are mad!" interrupted Madge. "Do you not see that if you were married to Philip Vane, and that marriage were proved illegal, he would be a convicted felon? Or even suppose he evaded the law, his position would be lost, his power and prestige, all that makes life pleasant to him, gone for ever! You have romantic

dreams, I suppose, of some sunny paradise, where you and he could live and love for ever. He would weary of you in a month, and when he found that you had been warned in time of the impending danger, and had neglected to inform him of it, he would kill you!"

"He might," said Mrs. Bendixen, "he might kill me then; at least I should have known his love."

"And with that charming sentiment we will close the discussion," said Madge, slightly shrugging her shoulders. "Hear my last words, for we shall never meet again. The man for whom you are sacrificing yourself is treacherous and base, mean and cowardly. He has not even the one redeeming virtue of independence, but so soon as he gets the opportunity, will live on you as he lived on me, and as he abandoned me he will, should it so suit his purpose, abandon you. I was young and inexperienced when I became his victim, you are a matured woman of the world, and have, besides, my example before you, and I warn you to profit by it. If you fall it will be with your eyes open, and in defiance of the hands spread forth to hold you back. But you will fall, for you are a woman and infatuated!"

She turned the handle of the door as she uttered these last words, and let herself out. Mrs. Bendixen made a faint effort to detain her, but Madge drew her clinging dress more closely round her, and, with the faintest inclination of her head, passed by. The hall was empty now, as, she could see through the open door, was the dining-room. On the croquet-lawn a few players were idly knocking about the balls, and under the verandah, immediately outside the hall-door, some gentlemen were seated in lounging-chairs, smoking and drinking. One or two of them raised their hats as she passed by, and each of them honoured her with a hearty stare.

Madge passed steadily on, outwardly calm and grave, inwardly perturbed and excited.

"It is over," she said to herself. "I have discharged my duty, satisfied the promptings of my conscience, and obeyed the bidding of Mr. Drage. What has been gained by so doing is another matter; little enough, I should imagine. That woman, ignorant, unschooled, and impulsive, is madly in love, and will allow nothing to come between her and her object. Strange that I should have seen her, and that he—called away suddenly, she said he was, called away by telegram on important

business. By telegram! that must have been the message, a copy of which Rose forwarded to me, and which I have here."

She drew the paper from her pocket, opened it, and held it out before her. The addresses, both of sender and receiver, were plain and legible, but the rest of the text was in cipher, a hopeless mass of letters, jumbled together, and broken up into short impossible words.

"I feel certain that there is something of importance herein," said Madge. "I cannot tell why, but I am certain of it. If I could only find a key to this cipher! I must, and I will."

BOOKS WRITTEN IN PRISON.

THIS title suggests a somewhat remarkable group of literary productions. There are many "prison books," compositions wrought out by the brains of luckless persons shut away from the usages and facilities of every-day life, and seeking some mode of occupying the mind that may avert melancholy madness. Isaac D'Israeli collected many examples of books written while the authors were in prison; Mr. Langford has since given fuller details of some of the men who wrote them; while other instances are only waiting for bookish people to ferret them out.

The great Boethius was a shining light among these writers. He was a Roman philosopher, in the days when the once great Roman Empire had begun to fall to pieces, and was rapidly going into extinction. He was learned among the learned at Rome and at Athens; he was thrice consul under Theodoric the Goth; but his rigorous impartiality as a judge raised him up enemies among the intriguers at court, who falsely accused him of maintaining a treasonable correspondence with the Byzantine or Greek government at Constantinople. He was cast into prison, and there kept until an executioner did his fell work. While in captivity, Boethius wrote a work which afterwards became renowned throughout Europe, the *Consolations of a Philosopher*. It is a noble, lofty-minded production, which was some four centuries or so later translated into English by Alfred the Great.

One of the examples is singular, because we know the name of the book, although ignorant of the name of the man. This is *Fleta*. It consists of a treatise or commentary on law, supposed to have been written during the days of the Plantagenets

by a prisoner in the Fleet. It suggested an imitation and an imitator. When Sir John Pettus was incarcerated in that same prison in 1683, he translated from the German a work on metals and metallurgy, and gave it the fanciful title of *Fleta Minor*.

During the sixteenth century, when there was a plentiful crop of distinguished prisoners and imprisonments in most European countries, books written by the captives were rather numerous. Maggi, an Italian scholar, mathematician, and military archæologist, rendered himself famous by his defence of Famagusta against the Turks, during which he invented ingenious machines which destroyed their works; but when the Turks afterwards succeeded in capturing the city, they took revenge on him by carrying him off in chains to slavery. Working hard as a slave during the day, he bravely conquered despondency at night by writing *De Tintinnabulis*, a treatise on bells. Our own Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, a gallant and chivalrous soldier, but a little wild withal, got himself into prison on more than one occasion for satirical hints at persons in power, and infractions of the civic rules of government in London. While in the Fleet Prison he wrote some of the sweetest songs and sonnets in the language. When afterwards imprisoned in Windsor Castle, for daring (as was alleged) to aspire to the hand of the Princess Mary, he wrote his *Prisoned in Windsor Castle*, which contains a charming reminiscence of days when he played at that same castle with a king's son for his companion, ending with two lines which have often been quoted for their deep meaning:

With remembrance of their greater grief,
To banish the less I find the chief relief.

A widely different man was Father Thomas, member of the Order of Hermits of Saint Augustine. He was imprisoned by the Moors in Africa, and wrote in Portuguese on the *Sufferings of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. He had no books, and could write only for a short time in the middle of each day, by a gleam of light that entered his dungeon through an air-hole. A different man, again, was George Buchanan, poet and historian, who seems to have been always at war with monks, and getting into trouble for abusing them. He was imprisoned in Portugal, about the middle of the century, for one of these attacks, and while in captivity wrote his *Paraphrase on the Psalms of David*. On the other hand, there was the Jesuit missionary, Robert Southwell, who, during about ten years of Elizabeth's reign, was imprisoned

over and over again. During the last imprisonment which preceded his execution, he wrote his *Saint Peter's Complaint*, and other impassioned religious poems.

Knowing what we do of the state of England during the reigns of James the First and Charles the First, we shall not be surprised at finding that most of the men who wrote books in English prisons during the first half of the seventeenth century were incarcerated either on religious or political grounds. There was James Howell, a writer and politician, who had a long imprisonment, during which he wrote *Familiar Letters* and other works, by the proceeds of which he supported himself. There was Richard Lovelace, the cavalier and poet. He was first a Charter-house boy, then an Oxford collegian, then a courtier, then a colonel in the service of Charles the First. He spent all his patrimony in support of the Stuarts, and formed a regiment at his own expense. Committing the unpardonable offence of presenting a petition to the House of Commons praying for the restoration of the king's rights, he was committed to prison at the Westminster Gatehouse, where he wrote his *Althea*. This is the poem that contains the famous lines :

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty !

Again, some few years afterwards, he was imprisoned, and during his incarceration wrote a collection of sonnets and songs, including the beautiful *Address to Lucasta*, which contains the often-quoted lines :

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Lov'd I not honour more.

Poor Lovelace ! Wood describes him as being "accounted the most amiable and beautiful person that eyes ever beheld ;" but his imprisonments and loss of fortune made the closing years of his life years of penury.

There was Thomas Lydiat, a learned clergyman and historian, who was thrown into the King's Bench as a means of curing him of his loyalty to Charles the First, and who, while there, wrote his *Annotations on the Persian Chronicle*. There was Sir William Davenant, who, similarly offensive to the parliament on account of his loyalty to the king, was thrown into Carisbrook Castle, where he wrote some of his plays and poems. On the other hand,

there was George Withers, farmer, lawyer, poet, satirist, and soldier in turn. He wrote *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, a satire which earned for him an imprisonment ; and in later years, after having fought for and with the Puritans, he was subjected to a still longer imprisonment by the Royalists. He complained bitterly afterwards of his treatment in prison. "I was shut up from the society of mankind, and, as one unworthy the compassion vouchsafed to thieves and murderers, was neither permitted the use of my pen, the access or sight of my acquaintances, the allowance usually afforded to other close prisoners, nor means to send for necessaries befitting my present condition ; by which means I was for many days compelled to feed on nothing but the coarsest bread, and sometimes locked up for twenty-four hours together, without so much as a drop of water to cool my tongue ; and being at the same time in one of the grossest extremities of dulness that ever was inflicted upon anybody, the help both of physician and apothecary was denied me." Nevertheless, in his *Shepherd's Hunting*, written during one of his captivities, there are some of the finest lines known on the consolation which poetry afforded him in time of trouble. There was John Selden, too, the learned jurist, antiquary, and historian, who got into trouble with Charles the First for writing against the divine rights and prerogatives of kings ; he had frequent and stern reason for knowing what the inside of a prison was like, and wrote one of his erudite histories while incarcerated.

But the two most celebrated men who come into the list of writers of books in prison in the first half of the seventeenth century are Raleigh and Cervantes. The gallant Sir Walter, after serving when young as a gentleman-volunteer, went with Sir Humphry Gilbert to America, returned and was knighted, raised a volunteer squadron against the Spanish Armada, and became a courtier. Something he did or said gave offence at court, and he resided abroad for some years. When Elizabeth died, and James the First succeeded to the throne, Raleigh returned to England ; but he was arrested, and found guilty of treason by a packed jury. Twelve years of his life were passed continuously in prison ; and here he wrote his *History of the World*, a marvellous work to execute under such circumstances. In order really to begin at the beginning, he begins with the Creation, and gravely discusses the opinions expressed by the learned, as to whether Paradise was as high

up as the moon, or only as high as mid-air, or under the equinoctial line. But still the History of the World is a noble fragment, which could only have been written by one who had read much, thought much, and travelled much. Hapless Raleigh! King James hated him with all the hatred which a narrow mind feels towards an intellectual superior, and sent him to the scaffold. The other great man, whose name we have coupled with Raleigh, was the Spanish novelist Cervantes, the author of the world-renowned *Don Quixote*. He was first a student, then chamberlain to a cardinal, and then a soldier. He was thrice wounded at the battle of Lepanto, was taken prisoner by the corsairs, kept five years in captivity, and ransomed by his friends. Returning to Spain, he married, entered upon civil employments, traversed wide regions of his native country, and watched well the habits and peculiarities of his countrymen. Monetary embarrassments, rather than political or religious discord, threw him more than once into prison; but this imprisonment was a great thing for the world, since it was occupied by the planning and commencement of *Don Quixote*.

Open the portals wide: let us admit the greatest prison-writer of the second half of the seventeenth century, John Bunyan, tinker, preacher, and author of a religious allegory which is said to have been translated into a greater number of languages than any other book in the world, with two exceptions, the Bible and the Imitation of Christ. He was thrown into Bedford Jail because he would not renounce dissent; and there he supported himself for twelve years by making tagged boot-laces. He wrote many controversial tracts, preached to his fellow-prisoners, and read to them the Bible and Fox's Book of Martyrs. It was a fine answer that he gave to the clerk of the peace, who advised him to gain his liberation by recanting. "Sir, the law hath provided two ways of obeying; the one, to do that which I in my conscience believe I am bound to do actively; and when I cannot by activity, then I am willing to lie down, and to suffer whatever they shall do unto me." And it showed a vein of humour in his character when he replied to a Quaker who had come to visit him, and who declared that the Lord had ordered him to search for Bunyan in half the prisons in England, "If the Lord had sent you, you need not have taken so much trouble to find me out; for the Lord knows that I have been a prisoner in Bedford Jail for the last twelve years." He wrote

the first part of the *Pilgrim's Progress* while in prison, a fact that ought to endear his imprisonment to us.

It is a singular coincidence that the authors of two of the most extensively read books ever written were living in the same country and at the same time, and wrote some of their works while in captivity. Daniel Defoe lived at the same time as John Bunyan; but the latter had reached middle age while the former was still a boy. Defoe, as a Whig and a dissenter, was often in trouble, and on one occasion suffered the pillory as well as imprisonment. While in prison he wrote his Hymn to the Pillory, and commenced a political periodical which he continued to several volumes. His immortal *Robinson Crusoe*, however, was not written during imprisonment. Over in France, Abraham Wicquefort, a Dutch diplomatist and writer, was for thirty years representative of the court of Brandenburg at Paris; he was then thrown into the Bastille by Cardinal Mazarin, on suspicion of being a spy; and while in the gloomy fortress prison wrote his *Mémoires touchant les Ambassadeurs, and l'Ambassadeur et ses Functions*. Then there was Voltaire, who had a year's incarceration for a satirical poem on Louis the Fourteenth; and another of less length for an unseemly quarrel at the Duc de Sully's house; during this second captivity he planned and wrote the greater part of his epic poem *Le Henriade*. Next was Nicholas Fréret, a French historian, who in his first work, on the Origin of the French, so offended the vanity of his countrymen that he was sent to the Bastille, where he planned many of his later works. Cardinal Polignac, another Frenchman, instead of being sent to the Bastille, was placed in a kind of semi-imprisonment in his own abbey, for some offence during the regency of Louis the Fifteenth; there he wrote his Latin poem *Anti-Lucretius*, which a century later was translated into English by George Canning.

There was one book written in prison which brought but little credit to the author; namely, the *Thoughts in Prison*. Doctor William Dodd, a clergyman, a popular preacher, a chaplain to George the Third, and a welcome guest in high society, lived so extravagantly that he was always in debt. In an evil hour he offered a bribe of three thousand pounds to the wife of the Lord Chancellor if she would procure for him the rich living of St. George's, Hanover-square; this caused him a mortifying exposure, and the loss of his chaplaincy. In a still more evil hour, he forged the sig-

nature of his patron and former pupil, the Earl of Chesterfield, to a bond for four thousand two hundred pounds. He intended, like many other forgers before and since, to take up and cancel the bond in good time, but failed; and his end was tragical indeed. The Thoughts, which he wrote while in prison, have been characterised as "the spasmodic, hysterical, and insincere utterances of a weak man under affliction."

A triad of writers will exhaust the remaining space at our disposal; they were men who, in more recent times, owed their imprisonment to political circumstances, and who solaced themselves in captivity by writing books. One of these was the late James Montgomery. When a poor shop-boy he wrote poems, and gradually worked himself up to the position of helper, writer, and editor of a Sheffield newspaper. His writings as a liberal brought him into trouble during the exciting period of the great French Revolution; and during two imprisonments which he underwent he wrote his Ode to the Evening Star, Pleasures of Imprisonment, Verses to a Robin Redbreast, and other poems. The opening of the address to Robin adverts to his imprisonment:

Welcome, pretty little stranger,
Welcome to my lone retreat;
Here, secure from ev'ry danger,
Hop about, and chirp, and eat!
Robin, how I envy thee,
Happy child of liberty!

The late charming writer, Leigh Hunt, was in early life connected with newspaper editing; and, at a time when speaking the truth was often an offence against the law of libel, he penned some words which brought on him a two years' imprisonment. To that captivity we owe the Descent of Liberty and the Story of Rimini. One name more is that of Thomas Cooper, who, becoming involved in the Chartist troubles of the last generation, suffered two years' incarceration, during which he wrote a remarkable poem, the Purgatory of Suicides.

A CUBAN CONVENT.

CACHITA, my creole lover, has been immured five long months in a nunnery, expiating there her "sin" of secret love-making.* In another month she will be released, and restored to her stern parent, Don Severiano, if the nuns' report of her be favourable; but should the efforts of those estimable ladies prove unsuccessful,

and Cachita persist in following the inclinations of her heart, the period for her incarceration will be protracted another six months, when, in accordance with conventual discipline, she will be required to commence her duties as novice.

Desirous of ascertaining how far monastic confinement has affected my lover's sentiments, I propose to sound her on the subject by private communication. This is not easily accomplished. The convent is a strong building. At fixed hours the outward doors are thrown open, and disclose a small stone ante-chamber, furnished with wooden benches like a prison. Here may a pilgrim enter, but no further. There is another and a stronger door communicating with the interior, and accessible only to a favoured few. Near it is a panelled or blind window, forming part of a torno or turnstile—a mechanical contrivance by means of which articles for the convent use are secretly admitted.

On more than one occasion have I visited the torno in the vain hope of persuading the invisible door-keeper behind to receive some love-tokens for my captive mistress. Tapping three times on the hollow window I pause until a voice murmurs, "Ave Maria!" to which I respond, being well versed in conventual watchwords, "Por mio pecados!" The voice inquires my pleasure. If it be my pleasure to have a missive conveyed to an immured "sister," and I can satisfy my unseen interlocutor by representing myself as a relative of the captive lady in whom I am interested, the turnstile rotates with magic velocity, the flat panel vanishes, and, behold, a species of cupboard with many shelves, upon which anything of a moderate size may be placed. Having deposited my letter on one of the shelves, it disappears, with the cupboard, like a pantomime trick, and the panelled window resumes its original dull aspect. But whether my document will reach the rightful owner I can never ascertain, for days elapse, and no reply is forthcoming. Varying my proceedings at the torno I sometimes express a desire to exchange a few greetings with my cloistered sister by meeting her in a certain chamber appointed for such a purpose, and conversing with her through a double grating. But the door-keeper informs me that such a privilege is accorded only to parents of the immured, who can prove their identity; so my effort in that direction is a failure.

Every Sunday morning I visit the convent chapel which is attached to the building itself, and is open to the public at prescribed

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. vi. p. 418.

hours. The chapel is a bare-looking sanctuary of small dimensions, and easily crowded by a score or two of ladies with white veils, who come to pay their devotions from the neighbouring houses. At one extremity of the whitewashed chamber is an altar-piece, before which a priest, assisted by a boy, officiates, and to the left is a strongly barred window connected with the interior of the convent. Behind this window, which is heavily curtained as well as railed, stand the nuns and other inmates of the cloister, who have come to take part in the ceremonies. The responses are chanted by this invisible congregation in a subdued tone. During a certain portion of the ceremonies the curtain is partially drawn, and the outline of a thickly veiled nun is discerned as she bends forward to kiss the priest's hand and to receive his blessing. I envy the ecclesiastic, and gaze with eager interest as figure after figure approaches in turn; but my sight cannot penetrate the dark recesses of the curtain, and the lady whom I seek comes and disappears unrecognised.

I am aroused early one morning by a black messenger, who delivers me a thick letter, which I open nervously, for I find it comes from the "Convento de la Enseñanza." The writing, though the contents savour strongly of monastic diction, is certainly in Cachita's hand, and is signed by herself.

"My dream of happiness," the letter begins, "can no longer be realised. My conscience, my teachers, and my father-confessor all persuade me that I have sinned in the outer world, and that if I desire to be absolved I must repent without delay. Exhorted by the worthy nuns, I am daily becoming more alive to a sense of my unworthiness, and convinced of the urgent necessity for beginning a new life of holiness and virtue. Guided to this blessed convent by the finger of Providence, I have been enabled, with the assistance of the best of counsel, to reflect seriously over what has happened, and I have now taken a vow never again to act from the impulse of my young and inexperienced heart."

After dwelling upon the enormity of the offence of making love without the approval of a parent, the writer exhorts me, by my "mother," and by other people whom I "hold dear," to return her letters, and all other evidence of the past, with the assurance that by so doing I shall accomplish one important step towards the "termination of the sad story of this ill-gotten wooing." The letter concludes as follows:

"Perhaps you will receive a parting word from me" (the present document occupies exactly eight pages of closely written convent paper), "which will put an end to this unfortunate story. You must, then, forget me entirely. Look upon the past as a dream, an illusion, a flash of happiness which is no more. Never must the name of Cachita escape your lips. I shall remember you only in my prayers" (the word "only" is erased with pencil). "Fail not to send the letters. And adios! till we meet in heaven.—CARIDAD."

The bearer of this letter is Guadalupe, a slave of Cachita's father, Don Severiano, and she is intrusted with messages to and from the convent. Twice a week she visits the torno cupboard, charged with changes of linen and other articles for her young mistress's use. Everything is carefully examined by a nun before being consigned to its owner; so my ingenious notion of conveying by this opportunity something contraband to my lover, cannot be entertained.

Having bribed Guadalupe with a bundle of cigars and a coloured handkerchief for a turban, I obtain from her in return some intelligence of her young mistress.

"Have you heard how La Niña Cachita fares?" I inquire.

"Badly," says the negress. "The monastic life does not agree with her lively disposition, and she yearns for freedom again, la pobre!"

"Then the nuns have not succeeded in converting her?"

"I think not, miamo. In a letter to her mother, Dona Belen, who has still a good opinion of your worship, mi amita Cachita ridicules the Monjas (nuns), and describes their strange ways."

"Has Don Severiano expressed his intention to release La Niña at the expiration of her allotted six months?"

"I believe so, and in that case La Cachita will be with us again in less than four weeks."

The most important information which I draw from the communicative black is, that my friend, Don Ignacio, the dentist, is attending my lover for professional purposes. I resolved to call upon Don Ignacio, and when Guadalupe has taken her departure with a packet containing a selection from Cachita's letters, and one of my own, which I have carefully worded, in case it should fall into wrong hands, I repair at once to the house of my dentist friend.

Don Ignacio sympathises with me, and promises to aid me in a plan which I have conceived for communicating by letter with

my absent mistress; but he warns me that there are many difficulties in the way of doing so.

"The nuns," he says, "who accompany my patient, stand like a couple of sentinels on each side of her, and no word or gesture escapes their attentive ears and watchful gaze. He must have more than a conjurer's hand who can perform any epistolary feat and escape their keen observation."

The allusion to conjuring reminds me of my scheme.

Will the friendly dentist recommend to his patient a box of his registered tooth-powder?

He will be delighted to have that opportunity.

"One of my assistants who accompanies me in my convent rounds shall include such a box in my dentist's bag."

Don Ignacio sees through my "little powder plot," as he calls it, and hands me a box of his patented tooth-powder, beneath which I afterwards carefully deposit a billet-doux.

But Don Ignacio can improve upon my scheme, and staggers me with his new idea.

"You shall deliver the box yourself!" says he.

The convent rules, he explains, allow him to introduce an assistant, or "practicante," as he is called. The same practicante does not always accompany him in his semi-weekly visits to the convent.

"On this occasion only," says the considerate dentist, "you shall be my practicante."

Early next morning we are on the threshold of the sacred ground. Don Ignacio boldly enters the stone antechamber, which I have so often timidly approached, and taps with a firm knuckle on the torno.

"Ave Maria Purisima!" murmurs the door-keeper from behind.

"Pecador de mi!" replies the practised don.

"Que se ofrece usted?" (what is your pleasure?) inquires the voice. And when the dentist has satisfied the door-keeper's numerous demands, a spring door flies open and we step into a narrow passage. Here we remain for some moments, while our persons are carefully identified through a perforated disc. Then another door opens, the mysterious door-keeper appears and conducts us into the very core of the convent. As we look over the convent garden, which is tastefully laid out

with tropical plants and kitchen stuff, a thickly veiled nun approaches us. The lady seems to be on familiar terms with the dentist, whom she addresses in a mild, soothing tone, as if she were administering words of comfort to a sick person. We follow her through a narrow corridor, where I observe numerous doors, which I am told give access to the apartments or cells occupied by the convent inmates. We pass a chamber where children's voices are heard. There is a school attached to the convent for the benefit of those who desire their offspring to receive religious instruction from the nuns. Music and fancy needlework are also taught, and some of the distressed damsels, who, like Cachita, are undergoing a term of conventual imprisonment for similar offences, impose upon themselves a mild form of hard labour by assisting to improve the infant mind. Cachita, who is a good musician, takes an active part in this branch of education.

At last we are ushered into a gloomy, whitewashed apartment (everything in the convent appears to be of wood and white-wash), where our guide takes leave of us.

While the dentist, assisted by his practicante, is arranging his implements for tooth-stopping on a deal table, which, together with a couple of wooden chairs, constitute the furniture of this cheerless chamber, an inner door is thrown open, and a couple of nuns, attired in sombre black, enter with Don Ignacio's fair patient. Cachita is dressed in spotless white, a knotted rope suspended from her girdle, and a yellowish veil affixed in such a manner to her brow as completely conceals her hair, which, simple practicante though I be, I know is dark, soft, and frizzled at the top. Her pretty face is pale, and already wears (or seems to wear) the approved expression of monastic resignation.

Following Don Ignacio's suggestion, I carefully conceal my face while Cachita seats herself between the sentinel nuns.

The dentist, with a presence of mind in which I participate but little, commences his business of tooth-stopping, pausing in his work to exchange a few friendly words with his patient and the amicable nuns. Hitherto my services have not been in requisition; but anon the subject of the tooth-powder is introduced.

Will La Cachita allow the dentist to recommend her a tooth-powder of his own preparation?

Cachita is in no immediate need of such

an article, but the dentist is persuasive, and the young lady is prevailed upon to give the powder a trial.

"You will derive much benefit from its use," observes Don Ignacio. "My assistant" (and here the cunning tooth-stopper, being close to his patient's ear, whispers my name) "will bring it you presently."

"What ails La Niña?" inquires one of the nuns, bending forward; for Cachita has uttered a cry, and swooned away.

"Nothing, señora," says Don Ignacio, with the same sang froid already noted. "Only a nerve which I have accidentally excited in my operation. She will be better presently."

The dentist desires me to bring him a certain bottle, and with the contents of this his patient is soon restored to consciousness.

"Keep her head firm," says my artful friend, addressing me with a faint smile on his countenance, "while I put the finishing touches to my work."

I obey; and though my hands are far from being as steady as an assistant's should be, I acquit myself creditably.

Cachita's mouth is again open to facilitate the dentist's operations, but also, as it seems to me, in token of surprise at the apparition now bending over her.

"You will find much relief in the use of this tooth-powder," continues my friend, in a careless tone, as though nothing had happened. "Very strengthening to the gums. When you have got to the bottom of the box—just open your mouth a little wider—when you have got to the bottom of the box, where" (he whispers) "you will find a note, I will send you another."

Cachita, by this time accustomed to my presence, can now look me fearlessly in the face with those expressive eyes of hers, which I can read so well, and before the dentist's operations are over, we have contrived, unobserved, to squeeze hands on three distinct occasions.

Assured by this means of my lover's constancy, I now take my leave of her, and patiently await the term of her convent captivity, which expires in three weeks' time.

THE RETURN.

JULIETTA! Julietta!

All around is still as sleep,
'Neath the stars the town lies silent,
And thy mother slumbers deep.

Sad and weary, worn and yearning,
Back from battle come I now,
All the dreadful war is over,
And the laurel decks my brow.

Julietta! Julietta!

'Tis Alphonso speaks, my dear!
Canst thou slumber on so soundly
While thy lover stands so near?

"Who is that whose hollow accents
Break my first sleep sweet and bright?
Who is he beneath my window
Standing ghostlike in the night?"

Julietta! Julietta!

'Tis Alphonso who doth wait;
Come again and speak unto him
Here beside thy garden gate.

"'Tis some thief and not Alphonso,
'Tis some robber in disguise.
Even if thou wert Alphonso,
It is far too cold to rise."

Julietta! Julietta!

By our parting, by our pain,
Here beneath the stars of heaven,
Let me kiss thy lips again.

"Hush and go away this midnight,
Come again to-morrow morn;
If our prying neighbours heard thee
They would hold me up to scorn."

Julietta! Julietta!

If indeed it must be so,
Reach me out thy hand, my dearest,
Let me kiss it ere I go.

"Hush, I hear some one approaching,
Go away, for I am ill,
I am very sick and sleepy,
Come to-morrow—if you will."

Ha, thou false one! Now full surely
I perceive the news is right:
Seven long years I have been faithful
In the day and in the night.

Seven long years I have remembered
Since we on this spot did part,
Yet already to another
Thou hast given away thy heart.

"My poor heart I have not given,
And I kept it safe for you;
At last Antonio came and stole it,
And alas! what could I do?"

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

SIX DAYS IN A CANVAS BOAT.

In the month of June, 1639, a worthy young Puritan trader, named William Okeley, set sail from Gravesend for the Island of Providence, in the West Indies, on board the sloop Mary of London, which was laden with linen and cloth, and carried six guns and about sixty seamen and passengers.

The stars from the first looked malignly on the Mary. After waiting for five weeks in the Downs for a wind, Mr. Boarder, the master, set sail, but let go the anchor off the Isle of Wight. "The next Lord's Day," setting sail again, they ran on the sands, but the tide coming in, they luckily hove off. The land after all would have been a better friend to them, even though a sand shoal, than the open sea. There were two other sloops in the good company of the Mary, and one of them carried nine guns. The sixth day, after the chalk cliffs

had gone down below the horizon, the crew of the *Mary* were startled at dawn (for at that time the sea swarmed with robbers) by seeing three ships about three or four leagues to leeward. After some consultation the master of the *Mary* decided not to run, but to stay and speak to them. The three ships soon looming larger, proved to be Moorish men-of-war, who quickly bore down on them. The master of the *Mary* resolved at first to fight, then too late weakly tried to run, which vacillating councils were ended at daybreak by the Moors, after a short skirmish, boarding and taking the three sloops. In the *Mary* six men were slain, and many wounded. There were many English prisoners in the Moorish ship, and with these lamenting wretches the new comers to purgatory consoled, and, during the five weeks afloat, learnt from them scraps of *lingua-franca* likely to be useful in the days to come of slavery in Algiers.

Arrived in Algiers, they were locked for the first night in a filthy cellar, and the next day were driven to the viceroy's palace, that potentate having, by right of office, a claim to every tenth slave captured by the Moorish galleys. The next market-day they were dragged to the market-place. The slaves were led up and down the market, and when any one made a bid the owner shouted, "Arache! arache! there is so much bid, who'll bid more?" Then the cautious purchaser looked at their teeth, felt their limbs, and by their beard and hair tried to guess their age, giving more if the slave had white and tender hands, since from gentlemen and merchants they expected large sums for ransom. All this time the man who bid decried the slave, the dealer, on the other hand, praised him; his chest, his shoulders, his strength, his growth, his intelligence, his skill, or his temper. The sale effected, the slave was driven back to the viceroy to first see if he cared to take him at the price offered.

The first market-day Okeley was sold to a Tangerine merchant of Moro-Spanish descent, and for half a year was employed in trudging on errands and carrying burdens. At the end of this time his patron's man-of-war, sweeping the Mediterranean, captured an English merchant vessel laden with plate from Spain, and he resolved to fit her with more guns, and start her as a corsair. Okeley was employed to help the carpenters and shipwrights engaged on this work. But now came the sharpest trial. One day the stern patron told Okeley he

must go in the new ship. In vain he pleaded he was no mariner; in vain he argued with his own sensitive conscience whether he could without sin fight against Christians. His court of conscience was abruptly broken up by his patron's command to put to sea at once; but the Moor gave Okeley money, clothes, and provisions, and he was, by his orders, treated with some mercy. In nine weeks up and down the Straits, the corsair only picking up one prize, an Hungarian-French man-of-war, the Moor called Okeley back to land, and ordered him to earn him two dollars every month. It seemed impossible—bricks without straw, interest without principle—there was but one conclusion, says Okeley, "to commit myself to God, who had brought me into this strait, beseeching Him to bring me out of it." Okeley first applied to an English slave, who kept a tailor's shop, feeling, as he wisely said, "that nothing that was honest could be base, and that necessity would ennoble a far meaner employment." The man readily closed with him, and Okeley's heart grew larger, for he felt that he could now escape the lash; "but God had not tried him enough," he adds, for the next day the tailor meanly backed out of his promise. Wandering about forlorn, he scarcely knew or cared whither, Providence directed him to another English slave sitting in a cheery way in a perfectly bare shop. Okeley disconsolately told him his story, and the good-natured fellow at once invited him to become a partner. It appeared that the man was driving a good but secret trade with unorthodox Moors in strong waters and wine, selling, besides, tobacco, lead, iron, and shot. His new friend lent Okeley some money to trade with, and to this the latter added a small sum he had concealed. The world smiled on the two slaves; they bought a butt of wine, and divided the profits of this business every week; but prosperity soon turned the head of Okeley's partner, and he grew drunken and idle. At this juncture it fell out that there one day came straggling to the shop John Randall, a brother sailor of Okeley's. He and his wife and child were slaves, and had to beg to earn the dollars remorselessly exacted from them by their patron. Okeley's good heart warmed to his old comrade: "I could not," he says, "but consider the goodness of God to me that I should now be in a condition to advise and help another which so lately wanted both myself, and it had this operation on me that

I would not suffer a poor distressed countryman—a fellow-captive, a fellow-Christian—to stand begging at that door where I had so lately stood myself. Shall I shut the door of my heart upon him, I thought, when God has opened a door of hope to me in the day of my trouble? Shall I so requite the Lord's kindness to me?" Okeley, therefore, kindly bade the man in, and set him to make canvas clothes for slaves, letting him remain in the shop rent free.

So passed four irksome years of slavery, till Okeley grew almost inured to misery, yet still, like a good Calvinist, lamenting that there was no one to "preach the Word." At last an English ship was taken by the corsairs, and among the slaves was a Mr. Devereux Sprat, a sober, grave, religious "minister of the gospel," whose monthly toll to his patron, Okeley and some other zealous slaves agreed to provide. Three times a week this "godly faithful servant of Christ" prayed to three or four score Christian slaves in a cellar which Okeley had hired as a store-room. This, he says, strengthened his faith and comforted his drooping spirit.

One day Randall, not feeling well, he and Okeley took a walk along the sea-shore, beyond the mile-tether allowed to slaves. Seized by a spy, and accused of attempting to escape, Okeley was liberated, but poor Randall was condemned by his more relentless master to three hundred blows with the baton (a tough short truncheon) on the soles of the feet.

Soon after this, Okeley's padrone, disabled by losses in privateering, was compelled to sell his slaves, whom he had long before mortgaged, to a cap-maker and an old farmer. The two men cast lots for Okeley; he trembled lest he should fall to the "brutish ill-humoured cap-maker;" but Heaven was merciful to the poor Puritan, and he became the property of the farmer, a good compassionate man, who regarded him with confidence, and treated him like his own son. But his new patron's farm was twelve miles from Algiers, and Okeley felt sure that the Moor intended to make him his bailiff and vicegerent there. Once there all hope of escape was gone, and he would be a slave for life. Fetters of gold are fetters still, so he resolved, with hope kindling in his heart, once for all to have a wrestle for freedom. With aching head he turned over every means of escape; at last, like a beam of sunshine, a plan, desperate but not impossible, suggested itself.

Having drawn out mentally a rough sketch of it, the brave and resolute man confided it to Mr. Sprat, the minister, who gravely pronounced it possible, that was all he could say. Then Okeley broke it to another fellow-slave, Robert Lake, "a wise and religious person," an old man, who pronounced his blessing on it, and wished it "godspeed." Next he told his firm friend, John Randall, still sore from the baton, who approved of it, yet would not run the fearful risk of its miscarriage, he having a wife and child. As for Robert Lake, he was too old to be useful, or to bear the fatigue, and as for Mr. Sprat, Captain Pack, of London, was already on his way with ransom to release him without danger. Okeley had still, therefore, to choose his companions. It was indispensable that they should be trusty, brave, religious, and strong men. The comrades he chose were, John Anthony, a carpenter, who had been a slave fifteen years; William Adams, a bricklayer, who had been a captive eleven years; John Jephis, a seaman, who had been five years among the Moors; John —, a carpenter, who had served the same term, and two others. These, with Okeley himself, made a band of seven, and all eager for liberty, though not all equally resolute, before being told the scheme, took a solemn oath never to disclose it, directly or indirectly, for fear or flattery, whether they did or did not finally approve it. Then in the morbidly conscientious breast of this Puritan captain arose a thousand casuistic scruples as to whether it was justifiable to God and man to attempt an escape from a master who so dearly loved him, so courteously treated him, and had so fairly bought him. First he thought, should he better himself in England, where the civil war had now broken out; but then he thought of "England, liberty, and the gospel." Next, as to the theft of himself; but he soon, like a man of sense, shook off this sickly scruple, deciding that a man is too noble a creature to be made the subject of a deed of sale, moreover, his consent had not been asked, nor had he forfeited the rights of man. He would escape or die; the sweet word liberty already made music in his ears, and his longing heart danced to the tune of it, as he eloquently tells us in his narrative of the wonderful escape. But now all sorts of gloomy difficulties crowded in to discourage the honest conspirators. They must build a boat, but how or where could it be launched? how could they escape the cruel Argus eyes watching them by day? how escape by night from a high-walled

city, so strongly barred, so closely guarded? But Okeley's heart never faltered; he would allow of no fears; he laughed and trod under foot all cowardly suggestions of danger. "Let us be up and doing," he cried, with a hearty voice, and in his cheery homely way, "and God will be with us. Well begun is half done." In his own cellar the boat should be built piecemeal, so as to be easier of removal. Majorca was the place he thought fittest to land at. In his bright hope he already stood on that free rocky island shore, and the weakest nature drew strength and courage from him as from a deep clear fountain.

We will use his own simple words to describe the building of the boat.

"In the cellar," he says, with his usual fervid piety, "where we had worshipped God, we began our work, and it was not the holiness, but the privacy of the place that invited us, and advised us to it. And first, we provided a piece of timber about twelve feet long to make the keel; but because it was impossible to convey a piece of timber of that length out of the city but it must be seen, and that suspicion would bring us into examination, and the rack or batoon might extort a confession out of the most resolved and obstinate breast, we therefore cut it in two pieces, and fitted it for jointing just in the middle. Our next care was the timbers or ribs of the boat, which we contrived thus; every one of the timbers was made of three pieces, and jointed in two places, because a whole rib, at its full length, would be liable to the same inconveniences with the keel. Now understand that the joints of the ribs were not made with mortise and tenon, but the flat side of one of the three pieces was laid over the other, and two holes were bored at every joint. All this while there is no visible provision made for boards to clothe the naked ribs of our boat, without which the keel and timbers looked but like an useless anatomy; but neither had we, nor was it possible we should have, any boards in our vessel. For the jointing of these boards, and the nailing of them, to make the boat water-tight, would require hammering, and therefore from the first conception of the design I always resolved upon a canvas. In pursuance of which thought, being all satisfied that it was practicable, we bought as much strong canvas as would cover our boat twice over, upon the convex of the carine; we provided also as much pitch, tar, and tallow as would serve to make it a kind of tarpaulin cerecloth, to swaddle the naked

body of our infant boat, with earthen pots to melt down our materials in, and prefixed a night wherein we might execute that part of our labour. The two carpenters and myself were appointed to this service, and the cellar was the place where we met. Matters had hitherto run on very evenly and smoothly, but here we met with some discouraging rubs. For when we had stopped all the chinks and crannies of the cellar, that the steam of the melted materials might not creep out and betray us (there being no chimney), we had not been long at our work before I felt exceedingly sick."

Overcome with the pungent steam of the pitch, and forced to go into the streets for air, Okeley swooned, fell, and cutting his face, there lay till his alarmed companions found him, and carried him in weak and unservicable. Presently another man fell ill, and the work stood still. Okeley saw the imminence of the danger, for none of the men had such faith and hope as himself. Did their spirits once get cool they would soon freeze, so again he roused himself and urged them to the work. He therefore boldly threw open the cellar door, and as soon as the steam was gone and the men recovered their courage, pushed on the work at the canvas till nearly daybreak. The next night they met again, and throwing open the door, happily finished the work. Okeley stood sentinel at the entrance the whole time, to signal any approaching danger, and while it was still dark helped to carry the prepared canvas to his shop a furlong off. In the cellar they next adapted the framework to the keel, and the canvas to the framework, then fitted in the seat, and took the whole apart ready for removal to some safe place on the seashore.

William Adams, the bricklayer, who had often worked outside the walls, was chosen to carry the keel. Trowel in hand, and girded with dusty apron, Adams carried the keel in two pieces, and hid it in a hedge. One of the washermen carried the rib-timbers doubled together in a bag, among some dirty clothes, and stowed them away in another seaside field not far from the keel. The bulky tarpaulin was the most dangerous of all to carry; but at last it was put in a large sack, with a pillow over it, and taken by the washermen safely through the gates by day, openly, and under the very eyes of the soldiers and spies. Oars are the fins of a boat, and these Okeley and his fellows made of the slit staves of a barrel. They then laid in but a small supply of bread, know-

ing that if they did not soon make land they must be either drowned or recaptured. Two goat-skins sewn together served to hold fresh water. Okeley offered himself to carry through the gates canvas sufficient for a sail. He had not got a quarter of a mile from the town when, to his great agony, he saw the villanous spy who had before arrested him and Randall following him fast. The danger, however, gave him promptitude of mind; he at once walked boldly up to an English slave he saw washing clothes by the sea, and asked him to help him wash the canvas. They then pretended to wash the sail, and spread it to dry on the top of the very rock where the spy stood watching them. He soon went away, but Okeley, still fearful, waiting till the canvas was dry, carried it mournfully back to the city.

The day for attempting the escape was now fixed—June the 30th, 1644; the time, one hour “within night;” the place, a hill about a mile from the sea; and till then the conspirators dispersed, lurking here and there in hedges and ditches, till the blessed moment arrived.

There were two places thought suitable for putting together the boat, a hill and a valley. The hill, as we have before said, was first agreed upon, as having a good out-look; but when the night came they all suddenly preferred the valley, which was encompassed and sheltered by hedges. Near the top of the hill grew a fig-tree, and this tree two of the band were sent to saw down, as it was needful to strengthen the keel. Some Moors with barking dogs passed near the sawyers, but they keeping close, were not discovered. Moors were at work in a neighbouring garden, so that the Englishmen dared not speak, but they buckled to in good earnest at their serious work, pointing, pulling, nodding, and acting like builders of Babel, by signs and gestures.

“The two parts of our keel,” says Okeley, “we soon joined, then opening the timbers, which had already one nail in every joint, we groped out for the other hole, and put its nail into it; then we opened them at their full length, and applied them to the top of the keel, fastening them with rope-yarn and small cords, and so we served all the joints to keep them firm and stable; then we bound small canes all along the ribs lengthways, both to keep the ribs from wearing, and also to bear out the canvas very stiff against the pressing water. Then we made notches upon the ends of the ribs or timbers, wherein the oars might ply,

and, having tied down the seats, and strengthened our keel with the fig-tree, we lastly drew on our double canvas case, already fitted; and really the canvas seemed a winding-sheet for our boat, and our boat a coffin for us all.

“This done, four of our company took it upon their own shoulders, and carried it down towards the sea, which was about half a mile off. It was a little representation of a funeral, to see the four bearers marching in deep silence, with something very like a hearse and coffin upon their shoulders, and the rest of us decently attending the ceremony; but we wanted torches, and, besides, it is not usual for any to wait upon their own coffins. But we durst not grudge our boat that small and last office, to carry it half a mile, for we expected it should repay us that service and civility with interest, in carrying us many a league; we carried it at land, where it could not swim, that it might carry us at sea, where we could not walk. As we went along they that were in the gardens heard us passing by, and called to us, ‘Who comes there?’ but it was dark, and we had no mind to prate, and therefore, without any answer, we silently held on our way.

“When we came to the seaside we immediately stripped ourselves naked, and, putting our clothes into the boat, carried it and them as far into the sea as we could wade, and this we did lest our tender boat should be torn against the stones or rocks, and then all seven of us got into her. But here we soon found how our skill in calculating the lading of our vessel failed us; for we were no sooner embarked but she was ready to sink under us, the water coming in over the sides, so that once again we must entertain new counsels. At last one whose heart most failed him was willing to be shut out, and rather hazard the uncertain torments of the land than certainly be drowned at sea; then we made a second experiment, but still she was so deep laden that we all concluded there was no venturing out to sea; at length another went ashore, and then she held up her head very stoutly, and seemed hearty enough for our voyage.

“It was time now to commit and commend ourselves and vessel to the protection and conduct of God, who rules the winds and the waves, and whose kingdom is in the deep waters, imploring mercy for the pardon of our sins, and resigning up our souls to God, as if we had been presently to suffer death by the hand of the executioner; and, taking our solemn fare-

well of our two companions, whom we left behind, and wishing them as much happiness as could be hoped for in slavery, and they to us as long a life as could be expected by men going to their graves, we launched out upon the 30th day of June, in the year of our Lord, 1644, a night for ever to be remembered by his poor creatures, who are ourselves great monuments of Divine Providence."

Five men only after all started; Okeley, John Anthony, John Jephth, John —, the carpenter, and William Adams, five men in a frail canvas boat, with an adverse wind raging against them, and Algiers upon the lee shrouded in the angry darkness.

"We were now," says the brave narrator, "without helm or pilot, without anchor, tackle, or compass, but God was these, all these, and more than all these. Our number was small, our work was great, we could not afford one idle hand, not one idle finger; four of the company continually wrought at the oars, and indeed we wrought for our lives, and then I shall not need to say how we wrought; but this I shall say, I can truly say it, I never saw strength so strained, nor the utmost of what nature could do for life and liberty exerted so much in all my life. The employment of the fifth man was more easy, but no less necessary, which was to free the boat of that water which by degrees leaked through our canvas.

"We laboured the harder that night, because we would gladly be out of the ken of our old masters by day; but when day appeared, we were yet within sight of their ships that lay in the haven and road, and off the land; but our boat being small, and lying close and snug upon the sea, either was not at all discovered, or else seemed something that was not worth the taking up; a little hope in the midst of great fears made us double and redouble our diligence; we tugged at the oars like those who are chained to the galleys, because we had no mind to be slaves to our old patrons.

"But upon all occasions we found our want of forecast, for now our bread, which was to be the staff of our decayed strength, had lain soaking in the salt water, like a drunken toast sopped in brine, and was quite spoiled; and our fresh water in the bottles stank of the tanned skins and owse, having lain in the salt water, which made it nauseous. But yet, that hope that hovered over us, and flattered us that we should one day mend our commons, sweetened all again. So long as bread was bread, we complained not; three days with

good husbandry it lasted, but then pale famine (which is the worst shape death can be painted in) stared us in the face."

The adverse wind doubled the cruel, ceaseless labour, and yet defeated it. They moved, but did not advance. The waves strove hard to swallow up those poor wretches toiling for life and liberty. One or two, soon losing heart, began to declare that God, whom the wind obeyed, was fighting against them, and proposed to bear up with the wind, and return to slavery in Algiers. But hope and Okeley again roused them, and at last they determined, whatever happened, to struggle on while they had breath, strength, and life. Their perseverance was rewarded as perseverance generally is. The wind presently shifted round like a feeble enemy, and sided with them.

Still the danger was very imminent. Unlike tired sentinels who watch on, knowing that the welcome relief will soon come, these poor fellows had to labour without intermission. They might shift, but they could never rest. Another great evil was the raging heat of the sun, which burned like a furnace. The only alleviation they could obtain was that the fifth man, who kept baling the frail boat, threw sea-water over them, for their skin now began to rise all over in blisters. In danger, in pain, and almost in despair, Okeley and his men toiled all day quite naked, at night putting on their shirts or loose coats, their only clothing. For steering they had no guide but a pocket dial; by night they were guided by the stars, and when the stars were hidden, by the motion of the clouds.

In this sad and miserable plight they continued four long days and nights. On the fifth day despair took its dismal place among them, and hope flew from them. They laid down their oars, for their strength was all but gone, and gloomily baled the boat, loth to drown, loth to die, yet seeing no way to avoid a dreadful death from famine or the waves. They now resolved, in their dark and utter despair, to make to any vessel they could discover, even an Algerine. While in this dead ebb of hope, God, who saved "Israel at the sea, and the three young men in the fiery furnace," sent relief. As they lay in a lull they suddenly discovered floating near them a large sleeping tortoise. Not the sight of a Spanish plate fleet was more grateful to the eager eyes of Drake. The boat was silently rowed up, and they took the broad-shelled creature rejoicingly on board. Off went its head, the blood they caught in a pot, and

drank by turns. The liver they ate, the flesh they sucked.

The good warm food strengthened them at once both naturally and through the imagination; they fell to work like lions, and pulled hard, fast, and faster on. That did it. That very noon they discovered land low, faint, and blue in the far distance. Okeley lays down his pen, and finds it impossible to express the joy and triumph of that blessed moment. Fresh blood poured through their veins, fresh colour came to their cheeks; they looked like persons risen from the dead. Yet fear still held hope so chained and bound, that they could hardly believe that it was really land. It was new life only to them to see it, but five days of only sea and air, air and sea, and so many hopes deceived, made them distrust even land itself. Still the hope made them toil hard to see if they were deceived or no, and when they were fully convinced the land was no dream, their joy was extravagant. Regardless of the sharks that abounded in those seas, they all at once leaped like madmen into the water, to bathe and cool their streaming limbs. Then they all returned to the boat, and worn out with toil fell asleep.

Awaking in time to bale the boat, and refreshed by the sleep, they worked harder at the oars, but made but very little way. Towards evening another blue spot appeared on the horizon; that second island was *Fromentiere*, the first *Minorea*, as some of the sailors now recognised. All that night the men rowed hard, and on the evening of the next day, the 6th of July, reached the island at a place too rocky to climb. Just then a vessel, probably a Turkish corsair, passed, but they lay close, and gently creeping round the island landed in a safe place, and with great thankfulness to God, made fast their weather-beaten boat. After some danger from the shot of a Spaniard in a seaside watch-tower, Okeley and his companions reached a well, drank with great difficulty, and fell asleep. The next day, with feet raw and blistered with the sun and salt water, the five men crawled towards the city of *Majorca*, sleeping by the way beside a well. In the town they were kindly clothed and fed, and taken before the viceroy, who was anxious to know the strength of the Algerine fleet. From thence they went in a Spanish war galley to *Alicante*, from there, pursued by two Turkish pirates, in an English vessel to *Gibraltar*. From *Cadiz*, Okeley and his party got to *St. Lucar*. Thence an English vessel charitably took them to England, and

they arrived in the old country, after a five weeks' voyage, in September, 1644. Okeley's canvas boat was long hung up as a monument in the church at *Majorca*. This brave and excellent Puritan afterwards became bailiff to one of the *Osborn* family at *Chickson*, in *Bedfordshire*, between *Amphill* and *Shefford*. His narrative, which he called *Ebenoezer*, or a *Small Monument of Great Mercy*, was not published till 1675, thirty-one years after the events; a third edition was published in 1764.

GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S NARRATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THAT STATE OF LIFE," &c.

IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER X.

As the morning wore on, I resolved to obtain an interview with *Assunta*; but how was this to be accomplished? Was it true that she was free? that this seclusion in her boudoir was voluntary? She did not appear at breakfast; I saw no sign of her about the house. If the maids in attendance upon her were spies, I must guard against arousing their suspicions. *Mr. Ridgway* was busy in his study with his translation of *Horace's Odes*, which he had talked of to me all breakfast-time, pointing out the difficulties of the task, and by what happy turns he had paraphrased the poet's verse in places. I was at my work in the crimson saloon, the windows of which overlooked the terraces and fountains at the back of the house. I listened to every footfall on the gravel, but only a *gardeur* or two passed that way. Towards noon, I took up my hat, and strolled out. I passed her boudoir window; she was not there. I sauntered down to the water's edge, and watched the wild fowl stringing pearls along the surface of the lake; and then I turned, and made my way through a wire wicket into the great gardens at the other side of the house. I had traversed all the broad alleys, and was speculating on the small amount of pleasure this stately place could afford to its owner or his unhappy wife, when, on crossing a walk narrower than the rest, and screened by a thick yew-hedge from the house, I saw her whom I had despaired of finding, seated at the further end, as motionless as the Greek nymph with her urn on its pedestal above her. She raised her eyes as I approached, that was all. The hands lay listless on the long, stone-coloured cloak, which covered her to the very ground; the very outline

of the broad-leafed hat was unchanged against the background of dark yews; her eyes were just lifted to mine, no more.

"I am so glad to find you," I began. "I feared you were going to remain in your room, as you did all yesterday, and that I should not have a moment's conversation alone with you."

"I come here twice every day," she replied, quietly.

"I think this is not so pretty as some other parts of the garden," I observed, by way of saying something. My great object was to get her to talk, and this, I feared, would be difficult. She was silent for some minutes. Then, as it she felt she must say something, she said:

"I come here to watch a blackbirds' nest in that laurel-bush. I saw them begin and finish it, and now I watch the mother-bird sitting."

"Ah! I see her. Have you many birds about here?"

"I don't know—yes, I suppose so."

"And any pets of your own?"

"No. The less one loves, you know, the less there is to lose."

"Yet you take an interest in these birds?"

"It is the mother's loving care of her little ones I come here to watch. Oh! if I had but a little one of my own!" she exclaimed, with a sudden passion, "I could bear anything—anything. But the sins of the fathers are visited on the children. My own mother abandoned me. I clung to nothing, and nothing will ever cling to me. I shall go out of the world, a waif, as I came, leaving nothing behind me!"

"You are too young to talk thus. While there is life there is——"

"Not hope! No, there is no hope for me but when this life is ended. Would to God it might end to-night!" She had worked herself up into a state of excitement, and spoke rapidly. "Mr. Ridgway thinks I am mad, perhaps I am. I know I have said things I should not; if I talked I might be tempted to say them again. That is why I am dumb, as you see me. If I should ever talk to you about—about him, don't believe what I say. I have been the ruin of one already, in my short life; I will not be his ruin, too, God help me!" Then suddenly dropping her voice to a low tremulous tone, "Mr. Luttrell," she added, "have you seen Harry lately?"

I dreaded to touch upon that theme. "No; I see none of them now. My links with the Grange are all snapped. But in memory of that good time that is past," I

went on rapidly, "will you treat me as a true friend, and tell me if there is any way in which I can serve you? The opportunities of my seeing you alone, while I am here, may be few, therefore I seize this moment to say what is on my mind. I am doing what nothing can scarcely ever justify, but the circumstances of your case are peculiar, and you have just alluded to them in terms which I cannot misunderstand. You are unhappy. Is there anything in your position which you would have altered—which the intervention of friends might improve in any way?"

She looked at me with her stony eyes. "There is no improvement possible—no change, for better or for worse, until the great change comes, when I shall lay my burden down, and be at rest."

There was a light step upon the gravel. I looked up; Mr. Ridgway was at the further end of the walk, swinging his cane as he approached us, with a placid aspect. But he glanced keenly at both faces as he said:

"March winds are treacherous, my dear. It is too cold for you to be sitting here."

"I am not like the wind," she returned, calmly, "and it does me no harm." Their eyes met.

I thought Assunta was about to speak again, but she checked herself, and, rising, walked silently towards the house.

"Well, Mr. Luttrell, and how fares your work?" Mr. Ridgway laid a light hand upon my arm; and I took the double hint—first, that the master expected his labourer to be earning his wage at this hour; secondly, that I was by no means to follow the lady, but to remain with him. I answered that I had done my morning's work; it was necessary that some preparation I had applied should be left to dry for several hours, before I again touched the canvas.

"Has Mrs. Ridgway been more communicative to you this morning? Has she thawed under the rays of old acquaintanceship?" he asked, with a careless air, which veiled but indifferently the sharpened curiosity with which he looked at me.

"On the contrary; she seems to shrink from conversation. I fear she is very far from well, Mr. Ridgway. Do you not think it would be advisable to have further medical advice?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "You cannot 'minister to a mind diseased.' There is nothing but time—time and a little philosophy. That enables one to bear most things in life if she would only think so.

What is the use of brooding over the past, and imaginary ills of every kind, instead of seizing the pleasures of the hour, eh? There is something in the *Persæ* of Æschylus to that effect, if I remember right."

On the morning of the fourth day I received the following letter:

London, March 7th.

DEAR LUTTRELL,—My brother says he was sent for eighteen months ago by Mr. Ridgway, and made the journey to Hapsbury expressly for the purpose of seeing that gentleman's wife. He remained there one night. She was suffering from hysteria and great mental irritability, tending to produce delusions of a painful character. His advice was that she should be watched, and that care should be taken to avoid any excitement for her. He did not consider, at that time, that restraint was necessary. This is all the information upon the case my brother says he is justified in giving. As to the subject of the unhappy lady's delusions, that is a point upon which he will always consider himself in honour bound to be silent.

I am, dear Luttrell, very truly yours,
F. L.

So far, then, this evidence was in Mr. Ridgway's favour, and it confirmed a painful impression which had been daily strengthening in me, that the balance of Assunta's mind was, in some measure, shaken. Every evening, and on the rare occasions when we met during the day, she observed her immovable demeanour, never again relaxing even to the extent she had done in the garden on the first morning after my arrival. It was not the aspect of mere dejection; there was something unnatural about it, as though the exercise of self-restraint taxed the powers of the sufferer almost beyond endurance. She never seemed to do anything; she sat for hours at her window, and would give me a little nod as I passed; sometimes I heard a few wild chords on the piano; but the sweet soul of the music I had known in bygone days was not there. I tried to arouse her interest about books; but she, whose intelligence had formerly been so keenly alive to such topics, now responded apathetically to every appeal of the kind. Her thoughts, it was clear, were fixed immovably on one subject; it remained but to ascertain whether, upon that subject, her ideas were lucid and coherent. How was this to be done in the face of a stony reserve, which it seemed hopeless to penetrate?

I had been at Hapsbury nine days; it wanted but one more to complete my work; and by no subterfuge could I prolong my stay. Late on the afternoon of the 12th of March occurred an incident which elicited a reply to the question which I have above recorded.

CHAPTER XI.

THE fierce March winds which had swept across the wolds during the past week had given way to a mild beneficent rain, softening the cracked earth, and healing its suffering vegetation. Husbandmen and fox-hunters alike rejoiced; the latter indeed regarded it as a boon sent especially from heaven for the promotion of their favourite sport. "You see, sir," as the old coachman said to me, "the groun's as 'ard as nails, and knocks them poor 'osses' legs about terrible." Not that Mr. Ridgway cared either as agriculturalist or sportsman. The bitter blast chapped his face as he sauntered up and down the terrace in a sable coat, polishing a line of his translation, and therefore he was glad of the change. Otherwise, the tender shoots, too early forced forward by a warm February, might be cut off for all he cared, and fox-hunters be exterminated from the face of the iron-bound earth. With his proclivities it was much that he was not that abhorred thing, a "vulpicide." It might have been looked for that he should have trapped every fox in his covers, and have rigidly shut his park gates against "the field" when in full cry. But diplomacy led him always to try and stand well with his fellow-men when neither obstinacy nor resentment ranged themselves on the opposite side, as they did in the case of his feud with the village. The master of the hounds had permission to draw the Hapsbury covers when he pleased; and once at least in the season the meet was at the house itself, when a sumptuous breakfast was prepared for such as were disposed to avail themselves of Mr. Ridgway's hospitality.

On the day in question the hounds had met some miles distant. But the direction of the wind, which had shifted round to the south-west, led my friend the coachman to predicate that, if found, Master Reynard would be likley to run in our direction. The rain cleared away as the day wore on, and late in the afternoon, my work being completed, I set off for a distant hill in the park, which commanded a vast expanse of country. A dweller in the great city from my youth

upwards, I had had few opportunities of seeing the chase, but it had always possessed great attractions for me from a pictorial point of view. There is no prettier sight I think than the hounds in full cry, and a large "field" after them. On this memorable afternoon I toiled over some ploughed fields and up a steep bit of down, in the hopes of getting a sight of the run, if it should haply come in this direction; and I was rewarded. When three parts up the hill, I caught the faint sound of the huntsman's horn from a distant cover, and then presently the yelping of the hounds, and the far-off "Tally-ho!" reached me, growing stronger as I breasted the rising ground. A moment more and they came in sight—in front, a reddish-brown speck, scudding away for dear life across the fields, followed, after an interval of shouting, hallooing, and yelping, by other specks, white and liver-coloured, and then a great stream of riders in scarlet, pouring from the wood at every issue. I watched them down by the furzy hollow, to some water-meadows, and over a brook which skirted the park on this side; then Reynard slipped through the fence, and was away across the open sward, making straight for the house, while the "field" took advantage of a gate a few yards further on, and swept into the park in straggling defile. I ran down the hill, hoping to come in for the death in the open, for now the thick coppice hid them all from my sight; but by the time I had traversed field and coppice all vestige of them had disappeared, and the deep quiet of twilight was beginning to gather over the park. I walked rapidly towards the house, which was still a mile distant; there was not a sound; nothing to indicate that a great company had just passed that way, and must still be near at hand. As I skirted the lake, and the Italian portico and flight of steps came in sight, I saw, to my surprise, a crowd of men on foot, and several hunters, held by grooms, around the entrance. What could this mean? Had the fox been killed on the very door-steps? I hurried on; and when I broke into the public footpath, a few yards from Assunta's window, there she stood, with dilated eyes, one hand twisted in the string of the window-blind, the other clutching the sill. She did not see me; she saw nothing but the knot of men in scarlet under the portico. A man passed me on horseback at full gallop.

"The doctor lives four miles off," I heard a man say as I came up.

"What has happened?" I asked.

"A gentleman has had a very bad fall. I'm afraid he's killed."

"No, no, not so bad as that; he's only stunned, and his head is hurt. If we could but get a doctor!"

"It was nothing of a jump," said another, "and Harry, who never stops at anything!—how the deuce did it happen?"

"He'd been up all night as usual, and was screwed when he came out; and he has had a pull at his brandy-flask whenever he could during the day. I saw he'd no seat as we were galloping along in the open."

"Who—who is the gentleman?" I asked, with a horrible anticipation of the truth.

"Mr. Walbrooke, of the Grange."

I ran up the steps and pushed by the crowd of servants in the hall, forcing my way into Mr. Ridgway's morning-room, on the left-hand side, where they told me poor Harry lay. I found him stretched upon the sofa, surrounded by three or four gentlemen; one ripping open the high black stock men wore in those days, another dashing water in his face, women-servants hurrying to and fro with sponges and basins, Mr. Ridgway standing just so much concerned as good breeding demanded, with his back to the fire. I looked upon my old friend's face, the face that I had known in boyhood so fresh, so very fair, so full of glee and impudence. It was hardly recognisable. Bloated, swollen, great purple stains under the eyes, deep furrows from the nostrils to the corners of the mouth, I asked myself whether it was possible that this could be the man I had last seen scarcely two years ago? He remained insensible. A little stream of blood flowed from the temple, which the women stanchied.

"How soon can the doctor be here?" I asked.

"It all depends on whether he is at home when the message reaches his house," replied Mr. Ridgway. "Jane, there is a spot of blood on the carpet. You had better have Mr. Walbrooke carried to a bedroom. It is impossible that he can be removed from the house to-night. Mr. Mandeville, will you not have a glass of sherry before your long ride home?"

The gentleman thus appealed to, and violently roused to a consciousness that he was not expected to remain much longer in attendance upon his friend, boldly said that, with Mr. Ridgway's permission, he would stay till the doctor's arrival. The others, who, I take it, were but slightly acquainted with their host, meeting with no encouragement to do likewise, left the room one after another.

"You will find refreshment in the dining-room," said Mr. Ridgway, with infinite urbanity. "Thomas, show these gentlemen the way, and admit no one else but the doctor, when he comes."

We carried poor Harry between us to an upper chamber, and laid him on the bed. About half an hour after the doctor arrived. He pronounced that there was a slight concussion of the brain, from the effects of which the sufferer was even now slowly reviving. The collar-bone and two of the ribs were broken. What the internal injuries might be it was impossible, at present, to ascertain.

"Cut off his clothes as soon as you can, and get him into bed before he becomes conscious of pain," said the doctor. And Mr. Mandeville and I performed this operation, aided by one of the servants. It was lucky we did so. Scarcely was the poor fellow free from his saturated, mud-stained garments, when his whole body became convulsed by the most violent twitchings, followed by groans, rising gradually into shrieks. The eyes glared wide, utterly unconscious of all around; a cold sweat started out upon his forehead, and then suddenly a tremor seized him from head to foot. For some time he seemed incapable of articulation; his lips moved, and he uttered wild yells, like those of some tortured animal, but he said nothing, until at last, leaping up in the bed, he shouted:

"Take them away! For God's sake, man, take them! They're crawling all up me. There! there! my arm. They've got hold of my arm—ugh! They're getting inside me! They're choking me! Kill them, for God's sake! Can't you see them? black, slimy things—ugh! They're fastening on me; they're sucking my blood out. Help! Will no one take them off? There, man, there! They are plain enough. Damnation!"

And the shriek that followed must have resounded to the furthest corner of the house. It is enough to give a sample of his ravings. Over the painful scene that followed I draw a veil. It took four of us to hold him down, and his injuries, poor fellow, made it doubly difficult and cruel work. The doctor poured a little brandy down his throat from time to time, then as the violence of the attack subsided he sank back, cowering among the pillows, and sobbing like a child. I was thankful that he knew no one, that he had no recollection of what had befallen him, or knowledge of where he was. Mr. Mandeville had now departed; the doctor and I and a servant

were left with Harry; Mr. Ridgway, much to my annoyance, kept looking in from time to time, studying the scene in a philosophic spirit from the doorway, and then sauntering out. I took advantage of the momentary lull in the frenzied man's condition to go into the passage and beg Mr. Ridgway to keep away from the room.

"Send up another man, if you will; the coachman is strong, and if another violent attack comes on we shall want him, but keep away yourself. You can do no good, and if he were suddenly to remember you, I can't say what the consequences might be. We must keep him in ignorance of where he is, when he recovers his consciousness, as long as possible, Mr. Ridgway."

"By all means," said my host, with a smile. "Were I vindictive I could wish the poor wretch no worse punishment for his brutal insolence to me—(do you remember that night, just five years ago?)—than to be reduced to such a state as this. It might cure Mrs. Ridgway of some of her sentimentality to see him now, with that blotched and bloated face."

"For Heaven's sake," said I, "see that Mrs. Ridgway remains in her own wing of the house, out of hearing of the poor fellow's ravings, if possible."

Mr. Ridgway looked at his watch.

"It is very near the dressing-bell. Shall we put off dinner for half an hour?"

"I can't leave him. You must excuse me. I could eat nothing if I came down."

Mr. Ridgway shrugged his shoulders with a little pitying smile for my weakness, and turned upon his heel.

The hour wore on. The sufferer's restlessness increased again. It was impossible to set the broken bones in his present condition. From the unshuttered window the last gleam of twilight died out, and night closed over the tops of the elm-trees in the park. Some one brought in a candle, and set it on a distant table. There was a strong light from the fire, which fell on the pillow, on poor Harry's wild eyes and fevered cheek, as he tossed from side to side, muttering and moaning. By this time they must be at dinner in the room immediately below. I thought of poor Assunta, sitting opposite her lord, and I wondered whether, by any evil chance, she had learnt who was the sufferer up-stairs. The doctor asked if it was possible to get some ice. I opened the door, which was directly opposite the bed, softly, to waylay a servant in the hall without ringing the bell. As I did so I thought I heard a rustle in the passage, but all was instantly still again, and I could

see nothing. I called to the butler over the stair:

"We want some ice. Are Mr. and Mrs. Ridgway at dinner?"

"Only Mr. Ridgway, sir. Mrs. Ridgway is not quite well, and is keeping her room. I'll send to the ice-house at once, sir."

It was a relief to find that Assunta was not so near at hand. Her own room was far away from the main body of the house. I shut the door, as I believed, and returned to the sufferer's bedside. He cried aloud that the faces of devils were gibbering at him from the corners of the room, that they were waiting to spring upon him, and then, before we could stop him, with a sound which was something between a howl and a scream, he bounded from the bed, and made one rush towards the door. It was open, and there stood Assunta, with clasped hands, clinging to the lintel, her white lips parted, her eyes wild with horror, trembling from head to foot. The others had seized and dragged back Harry to the bed. I ran to the door, and tried to lead Mrs. Ridgway away, but she clung to the wood-work.

"This is no place for you, you must come away," I said, and I forcibly shut the door from the outside. "Let me implore you to go back to your room, and remain quiet. I will come, by-and-bye, and let you know how he is."

"Remain quiet, ay, remain quiet," she repeated, as if mechanically. Then, her voice rising into a wail, the like of which I have never heard, "Oh, my God! my God! forgive me," she moaned. "It is I who have brought him to this." And with a cry as that of some wounded bird, she turned and fled down the passage, feeling blindly at the wall for support. My heart yearned to go after her, but what could I do? I watched her white garments fluttering along the dim corridor, until it made a sudden bend, and I lost sight of her. Poor soul! Poor soul!

This second attack of delirium tremens was even more violent than the first, and of longer duration. For nearly an hour it taxed all our strength to keep the poor fellow under subjection, listening, in the mean time, to his cries of abject terror, alternating with the most frightful imprecations. I would that any man with a tendency to drink had passed that hour with us. That awful lesson would have cured him if anything could do so.

The reaction came at last, and he lay there, exhausted, with closed eyes, the ice

on his head. The doctor believed he could now set the broken bones. A woman-servant entered with some bandages; I whispered to her, "Go to Mrs. Ridgway and say that the gentleman is much better." The clock struck nine.

I fancied I heard a commotion in the house, a hurrying of feet to and fro, the shutting of doors, the calling of many voices, and then, after a little interval, Mr. Ridgway opened the bedroom door, and beckoned me to come out. He was quite calm, but deadly white.

"Do you know where Mrs. Ridgway is?" he asked.

"Good God, no! What has happened?"

"She is not to be found. She is nowhere in the house."

For one instant I felt stunned, then a horrible presentiment curdled the blood in my veins, and I grasped his arm with a hand of iron. "The water, man, the water. Not a moment to be lost."

I ran down the staircase, and shouting to some of the men who were gaping there to bring lanterns, I seized a lamp in the hall, and dashed out into the black night, making my way straight for the lake.

One dreadful hour of suspense, the death agonies of hope, followed. That scene is before me now with terrible distinctness, the lights gleaming round the swampy edges of the water, the affrighted wild fowl fluttering in all directions, the shouts of men with torches throughout the park, the gathering crowd of villagers, and then—and then—at last something white is seen among the sedges, a man reaches it with a boat-hook, a great cry goes up from twenty voices at once—it is a body—they turn it over—and the moon shines down upon the upturned face of Assunta.

Life had been long extinct. When she left me and ran down the corridor, the poor soul, crazed with horror, must have opened a side door, and fled straight to the water. The men, returning from the ice-house, had seen something white flit past. She had cast herself in, face foremost, and had drifted to a place where the reeds and rushes caught the body, and held it wedged in among them.

I knelt beside her on the sward; I supported that dear head, and tried vainly to chafe back the departed life, and I have an indistinct vision of Mr. Ridgway, muffled in furs, standing before me.

In the long night of misery that followed I had but one comfort, one consoling thought—God had mercifully bereft her of reason to take her to Himself. It was as

much His will, as much His doing, as though she had been stricken by a lingering illness. Think of what her life, already unutterably wretched, would have been, after witnessing Harry's condition, the tortures of self-reproach that poor solitary soul would have suffered! I remembered the last word of her letter to him, "I shall die in your shame." It was true; the over-laden brain had given way, and so, in pity, the All-Wise suffered her to lay her burden down.

I have but little more to add. I must have spoken some bitter words to Mr. Ridgway, I suppose, in the course of that night, but what they were I have forgotten. The following morning I received a cheque for my professional services, with a few lines regretting that, in consequence of what had occurred, Mr. Ridgway was unable "to take leave of me personally." After this dismissal, it was impossible to remain longer at Hapsbury. It distressed me to leave Harry in his precarious state; but the doctor gave good hopes of his being able to be moved to the Grange in the course of a few days; he was conscious and perfectly calm now, and if there was no return of fever, he would do well. I impressed on the doctor the necessity of keeping his patient in ignorance of where he was, and of all that had happened, and I wrote by that post to Mrs. Walbrooke and to Lena, at Paris, urging their immediate return to the Grange to meet Harry, and offering to join them there, if they should require my services in nursing him.

But that summons never came. My injunctions to the doctor, though adhered to in the letter, were unfortunately, as I afterwards learned, violated in spirit. Mr. Ridgway behaved admirably, obtruding himself neither personally nor by any message upon the unfortunate rival thus forced to be his guest, while he gave directions that the sick man should want for nothing. But, by some strange oversight, or the cruel will of fate, Harry's departure from Hapsbury took place on the morning of Assunta's funeral, though an hour after the long pompous train had left the house. As he was being carried down the great stairs, the poor fellow looked around him, and recognised with a shudder of dismay the famous hall of Hapsbury, with its Roman emperors, and marble columns, unlike anything else in the county. Sad-faced servants in deep mourning stood there,

and, while he was lifted into his carriage, some workmen were hoisting a hatchment over the great portico. He shut his eyes, and turned deadly white: a minute or two later, the travelling-carriage passed in the park some of the mourning-coaches on their return. The sick man looked out as the first coach went slowly by; a face was at the window, it was Mr. Ridgway's.

Harry never recovered that shock. He insisted upon learning every particular of the frightful catastrophe that had happened, and, in their ignorance of the effect which a knowledge of the truth must have upon him, to appease him, as they believed, they told him all. He divined, no doubt, but too clearly what causes had brought this tragedy to pass, and the blow, falling as it did upon a constitution already undermined, hastened the end, which, I believe, could not have been long delayed. Peace be with thee, poor erring Harry! With all thy faults, I loved thee dearly, and I often think that, tried as thou wert, most of us might have fallen like thee.

Mr. Ridgway survived his wife twenty years. We never met again. I read his name occasionally in the papers, as present at one of the dilettante societies' meetings, or as having purchased some famous work of art for an enormous sum. And that is all I ever heard of him. He is long since gone to his last account, whither I, too, shall soon be called. What am I, that I should pronounce sentence on him, standing as he now does in the presence of that Judge before whom the secrets of all hearts are laid bare? He was a mystery to me from the beginning: he remained so unto the end; but it was a mystery, alas! that brought ruin and desolation into the lives of those I loved best on earth.

END OF GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S NARRATIVE.

Next week,

A NEW SERIAL STORY will be commenced in
ALL THE YEAR ROUND,

To be continued from week to week until completed,
entitled THE

WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

JUST PUBLISHED, THE

EXTRA DOUBLE NUMBER FOR
CHRISTMAS, 1871,

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER I. HOW THEY WERE PLANTED.

SIMON FINISTON was owner of Tobereevil, including Monasterlea; and the Wicked Woods were part of the patrimony of his race. On one side of his mansion lay long stretches of unploughed fields, and untrodden bog and moor. Behind him rose gracious mountains, clothed with the rich hues of gorse and broom. The thick woods wrapped him round about, and would scarce let the sun shine down upon his roof. These woods also crowded in brilliant masses towards the horizon on the east. The Golden Mountain, which did not belong to Simon, towered against the southern sky; so that the lower hills beside it looked like the ridges of a wave upon the sea.

The lands of Tobereevil lie in a remote part of the west of Ireland. They had beauty at the worst of times, but now that the curse has passed away they are lovely and peaceful as a vision of Arcadia. But at the time of the beginning of this story they were sadder and drearier than it is needful to describe. The curse was upon them then. Old Simon, the miser, was lord of many mountains and moors, of many fallows that ought to have been fields, many fields that might have been gardens, many hovels that might have been comfortable homes, and some spirit-broken serfs who should have been grateful and light-hearted friends. Yet Simon of Tobereevil was rather pitied than blamed. For was he not working out the doom, and suffering the punishment of a race accursed?

A strange story is told of this curse of the Finistons of Tobereevil. One Paul Finiston had come into the district when, as the legend saith, the country was prosperous, the people well housed and clad. He was a man who came no one knew whence, and had amassed money no one knew how. Some said he had made a fortune by usury. He had, however, the desire to make himself a gentleman, and had bought the estate of a decayed old family, who, after the usual long struggle, had dropped into the abyss of acknowledged poverty.

Yet he had no idea of stepping into other folks' shoes, of being only the successor of mightier people. He would not live under their roof, nor walk in their paths, nor even look upon the same scenes which they had looked upon. He would pull down their house, plough up their gardens, and plant trees in the spaces which they had cleared. He would sweep away their fences and make landmarks of his own. He would build a new house to his own taste; and he made it stately and handsome, and furnished it in a style of splendour which would have made his predecessors stare. The magnificence of his pictures, the costliness of his carvings and gildings, his hangings, and his carpetings, made a nine-days' wonder in the country. His servants were a small army, his horses were said to be fine enough and numerous enough to furnish mounts for half a cavalry regiment. His wines were fit for the table of an emperor. His carriages were built luxuriously upon a design of his own. He seemed preparing to lead the life of a prince, when suddenly there fell a blight upon his work.

Had he been content, says the story, with the alterations above enumerated, he

had lived his life of enjoyment, and his race had not been cursed. But in his passion for changing the face of the country he had conceived the idea of planting great woods over the land. In pursuit of this idea he must sweep away the people with their farms. He did not want tenants, he wanted trees. And he wanted to see his trees grow tall before he died. So he rooted out the tenants, as he might have rooted out weeds from his garden.

In one winter week a hundred poor families stood houseless on the snow, and their cabins and cottages were levelled with the ground. Their master, Paul Finiston, knew the way to the great world, but to these ignorant peasants the mountain side was their world, and they knew of no other. They looked on in amazement while the work of destruction was in progress, and clung to each other with cries when the savage night came down. Storm and sleet beat about them, and they could find no shelter for their heads.

Their cruel persecutor took no notice of their plight. He had toiled for his gold, and now should he be talked of his pleasure for a few beggars? Let them go out into the world and work. For him he would have his trees. And some of these houseless creatures did set out to seek their way across the moors, to carry the tale of their distress to some city where it could hardly be believed. The aged, and the women, and the children must of course be left behind to shelter in the hollows of the mountains, and watch in vain for the arrival of relief.

The story goes on to say that, after many days of hungry wandering, a wretched band mustered on the hills and came towards the dwelling of their landlord, intending to appeal to him for food and protection. A terrible snow-storm overtook them on the outskirts of the wood, at a spot where there is a deep well sunk in the earth. There their strength quite gave way, and they lay down to die. It was not till the next day, when he came by accident to the place, and saw the corpses lying around him, that this wicked landlord felt some pangs of remorse for his sin. But it was too late then, too late to rescue those who had perished, too late to save his race from the curse which had been miraculously pronounced.

The legend is told in Irish verse, and at great length. A translation of even half of it would weary the reader. It was an infant who uttered the curse:

There was a babe swathed up in snow-flakes,
Three dreadful days since first it saw the light,
It lay upon its mother's broken heart,
And she was dead and cold since the morning's dawn.

Then up and sat that awful babe of death,
And opened its frozen mouth and spoke aloud.
And all the people stared to hear it speak,
Even the dying raised their heads to hear.

This woful babe cursed the race of Finiston. Their riches should yield them no pleasure. They should perish with cold, and be gnawed by hunger. Their lands should lie waste, and their house decay. Their daughters should never live past childhood, and even those of their sons who had gentle hearts should become hardened by possession of the gold of the Finistons. The curse should lurk for them in the corner-stone of the wall, in the beam under the roof-tree, in the log upon the hearthstone, in the meat upon the dish:

In every bud and blade of grass that grows,
In every leaf upon their mighty trees,
In every kindly face that smiles on them,
In every pleasant word that neighbours speak.

In conclusion there was a prophecy. Never should the family be freed from the curse till one of them should be murdered by a kinsman of his own:

Then closed his eyes this dreary babe of woe,
And rolled away from off his mother's heart,
Her arms were stiff and cold beneath the snow,
And he lies buried in the evil well.

After such a dire event a mournful spirit was, of course, said to haunt the well, and from this the name of the property took its rise. The old name was forgotten, and the estate was known as Tobereevil, "The Banshee's Well."

The curse seemed to set to work at once upon the master of Tobereevil. He was seized with a panic, and not even his far-spreading, quickly-growing plantations could give him comfort. He could not forget that it had been predicted that his race should perish with cold, and be gnawed by hunger. He began immediately to retrench his expenses. Gradually he dismissed his numerous servants, sending away first one, and then another, upon some simple pretence. Now and then a carriage was sent back to the maker's to be repainted, or to get new springs, and never returned to Tobereevil. The horses also disappeared. One was too spirited, another too sulky. A fresh stud was to be procured; but time slipped away, and the stables remained empty. Gardeners and workmen, who had been brought from a distance, took their way from the place, and gardens began to lie waste, and the

place took a neglected look. The master, hungry-looking now, and ill-dressed, toiled at his farm, assisted by a small staff of labourers. His wife, who had come there as a sort of queen, faded away into a melancholy-looking spectre. His two sons grew up wild and half-educated. They were instructed in little besides the history of the curse, and the means to be taken to avert its fulfilment. These means were the saving of money, the stinting themselves and their dependents of the necessities of life, so that treasure might be hoarded, making it impossible that they should ever come to want. The elder was to inherit everything, the younger was to go abroad and work for his living. This was to prevent all risk of the family prosperity being scattered. The elder, however, a gentle, sickly lad, did not long stand in the way of his brother. The weight of the responsibility broke his heart, and he sought refuge from the curse in another world.

The younger son succeeded to the property at his father's death, and became the first genuine miser of Tobereevil. And so it went on from generation to generation. The curse and gold were handed from father to son, and from uncle to nephew. It was a singular fact that no daughter of the family ever lived to reach womanhood. And meanwhile the accursed plantations had grown up, and the magnificent Woods of Tobereevil spread for miles over the country, and grew thicker and darker, and grander and more mysterious, as the years rolled along, and the curse tightened its hold around the lean throats of the Finistons. The wicked trees grew proudly out of the hearth-places of the blotted-out homes. No wholesome roots and simples were to be gathered among their shades, but strange and poisonous herbs grew hidden in their depths, nourished by the evil atmosphere of the place. If an old woman were seen rooting in the dark places of Tobereevil Woods her character was gone, and she was looked upon as unholy, and a person to be shunned. There were stories from old times of people who had been poisoned, and people who had been made mad by noisome weeds that had been plucked in the heart of the Wicked Woods.

Six generations had passed away, and another Simon Finiston was master of Tobereevil. In his youth he had been gentle and almost generous, and a hope had been entertained that the curse was worn out, and that the reign of misery was

at an end in the country. The tenants on the estate trembled with delight at the prospect of having a merciful and sympathising landlord, of seeing the wild places brought to order at last, the decaying mansion restored, the plough marching merrily over the idle acres, and employment and plenty going hand in hand along the valleys and over the hills. But these hopes proved an idle dream. As soon as he became master of the property Simon's character underwent a gradual and miserable change. His gentleness degenerated into nervous weakness, his firmness into a dogged obstinacy. The friends who had hoped better things for him then dropped away one by one, and left him to his fate. The unhappy tenants fell back into despair, and the air was thick with their complaints.

And so at the time of the opening of this story the curse was still dragging out its evil existence. The heir to the estate of the Finistons was said to be a young lad named Paul Finiston, nephew of Simon, the actual owner. Simon had always kept him at a distance. He was a timid man, and it was said that he had a horror of the prophecy's being fulfilled in his own person. He dreaded being murdered by a kinsman of his own. However this may be, young Paul Finiston had never been seen at Tobereevil. His father and mother had paid a visit to the miser once. But they had hurried away speedily, and had never come back.

At this time, when Simon was growing old, the mansion of Tobereevil looked grim and dilapidated. It stood in a slight hollow of the land, with the sombre masses of the woods at its back, and a strong force of loftier trees mustering about it like a guard. The sullen grey walls were bleached, and blackened, and rain-soiled, and moss-eaten. There were broken panes everywhere, and shutters closed over them to keep out the wind. Weeds and wild plants grew on the pathways, and in the crevices of the steps at the entrance. A solitary cow grazed in the wild field that had once been a velvet-like lawn, and a few starveling hens pecked among the pebbles in the long rank grass. And in this dreary abode dwelt the man who was lord of Tobereevil, including Monasterlea.

CHAPTER II. SIMON'S SWEETHEART.

MONASTERLEA was a jagged green heap of majestic and picturesque ruins, standing in the centre of an ancient graveyard, and

there were attached to it some rich abbey lands, which made a comfortable farm. It had been built while Christianity was yet very young; it had swarmed with busy monks, and its bell had been heard for miles around calling over the land. It had sent forth blazoned manuscripts to the readers of its day, it had fed the poor, and it had tilled the earth. The sun had blazed upon its jewelled windows, where saints and angels gazed back again at the sun. Its music had floated towards the hills, and been the melody of paradise to many a wanderer astray upon the night. The legend of its ornaments, its mottoes among lilies and cherubs, had been perfect to the eye. Rainbows had streamed through its hollow arches, and the breath of incense had been warm upon its sculptured stones. Its friars had slept, and waked, and prayed, and toiled; then slept, and waked no more. And there were their graves under the carved stone crosses, whose lettering the hungry moss had nigh effaced. The jewelled saints had been carried to other shrines, walled up in trees, or trodden into dust upon the earth. The winds had rent away the hospitable roof; the fickle winds, which in so many a past winter had set a friendly bass to the chanting of the choir. The sanctuary was but a sheltered field where the sweet wild roses would blow out of their season. The tall grey tower was a building-place for rooks, and the clouds peeped pityingly through the high hollow arches. The sun filtered coldly through the ornaments of the vast Gothic window-frames. No glowing glass was there to turn its rays to flame.

The graves were everywhere—in the churchyard, where the people of the country still came to leave their dead; among the walls; in the archways; in the doorways. Yet this did not deter Martha Mourne, spinster, from thinking of making a home among the hollows of its walls. Miss Martha had had troubles of her own. In her youth she had been comely and lovable, and she had seen before her a certain prospect of wedded life, of matronhood, motherhood, and something of fine ladyhood besides. But now? Who could picture old Simon Finiston in the character of a wooer? No one certainly who saw him cowering over a single brand in the winter day in his mouldering mansion, or riding by like a spectre on a spectral horse. Who but Miss Martha herself could remember that he had been once handsome, and generous, and kind?

Miss Martha had travelled since the

days she had known him so. She had been saving the pittance of her fortune, acting as governess to little French children. She was not going to settle down in idleness, and eat up every farthing of her income. How did she know whom she might not have to help before she died? How could any one tell how useful it might be that she should have a little money saved when she was old? Now every one could witness how useful it had been when the money had been saved, and an object for her charity had been found.

It was a nine-days' wonder in the country when she arrived from her foreign exile, and was seen hovering about the lands and the walls of Monasterlea. A patient-looking lady in a brown silk cloak appeared suddenly in the country. She was noticed poking about the ruins with a large umbrella. Peasants passing on the road, or travelling the moors at a distance, saw strange and varied apparitions at this time. One had seen a fairy waving her wand at the ruin, and striving to put an enchantment on the blessed walls; another had seen the ghost of one of the friars; while a third had beheld a vision of a strange brown bird fluttering among the bushes.

Old Simon Finiston must have rejoiced greatly when he received a lawyer's letter offering him a tenant, not alone for the lands, but for the ruin and graveyard of Monasterlea. A heap of waste walls and a wild, useless field full of rugged green mounds and broken crosses! Let the fool who coveted them have them to be sure, provided he paid a heavy rent. Perhaps the miser received a shock when, the bargain being made, he read a legible signature on parchment. His tenant was called Martha Mourne.

But when the workmen began, then indeed there was a wonder in the country. Miss Martha chose a corner to the south—a pleasant little nook, where the sun loved to shine. She roofed in a space, and covered it with a warm, golden thatch. She had five latticed windows and a whitewashed front. She had four odd bedrooms and a quaint sunny parlour. Miss Martha had no fear of the dead. There was a strange Gothic doorway in the parlour wall close beside the homely hearth. This led away into a long dim cloister. The cloisters were rather in the way to be sure, but they could not be got rid of, and were coaxed into service. A piece of one persisted in running right across the dwelling, would not be expelled, and so was obliged to do duty as a passage into the kitchen.

Thus right between the kitchen and the parlour sat a grim stone angel with a font in his lap. And old Nanny would aver that there were nights when this angel arose from off his perch and walked about the cloister, scattering holy water to keep evil from the place.

But the little home looked shining and warm with the ivy from the wall, which was its prop and background, trailing in wild wreaths over its amber thatch. A well-stocked flower-garden ran down the slope beside the graves to the river-side. The hedges of sweetbriar and acacia flung blossoms over the moss-covered tombstones, and here and there the mutilated crosses leaned a little to one side, and peered through the rifts between the roses.

It was not for the purpose of watching over her ancient lover, of testing the toughness of his miserly heart, or striving to win him from his unnatural ways, that the woman in the brown silk cloak had come poking with her umbrella about the walls of Monasterlea. There was one to be thought of who was an older and a nearer friend. In days long past Martha had spent her childhood by the side of a very dear mother and two brothers in a home, now swept away, which had stood but a mile from Monasterlea. The elder brother had been many years her senior, but they had been happy together, when she was but an infant and he a big boy. He had been good to her, and his memory clung warm round her heart. The gates of a monastery had closed on him early, and she had seen but glimpses of him during a long lonely life. But at last there had come to her a message in her exile, praying her to visit and assist him. The message came from the prior of his convent. The old man, Brother Felix, was weakly. He needed to have some care, some comfort, some change. The convent was too poor, the rules too rigid, to allow of such luxuries as these. Would the sister take compassion on the brother of her youth?

"Gladly would I minister to him myself," wrote the prior, who was the aged superior of an aged community, "but I have not a shilling of my own in the world, and there is nothing I could sell of more value than my girdle, which if I were to offer to a peasant he could but use as a spangle for his horse."

But, ah! how the woman clasped her hands over the letter, and how the tears of joy coursed down her face! Blessed now be God, who had inspired her to lay by her poor savings! Adieu very fast to

the little French children, who were all grown up and quite ready to forget the old governess. Ah, Felix, the rogue, he could not do without her! Strong as he was he wanted her to lean upon. Felix had protected her, a child, but now it was he who was to be the child, and she, Martha, the protectress.

So the friars in the convent had a visit from Miss Mourne. She came in on tip-toe, with a bloom of delight under her weary eyes. She saw a little withered old man, in a coarse brown gown, tied with a rough white cord. His face was wasted to the size of a child's, and his features were not those which Miss Martha had known. But the countenance was meek and benign, and a placid light seemed to shine from it.

"Ah, little Martha!" he said, in answer to her broken words. "She was a dear little girl. Have you met her lately, madam? I should like to see her again before I die."

The tears dripped down Miss Martha's face.

"I am Martha," she said with a smile. "I am now grown old. But it is little Martha's heart which is beating here still." And she pressed his withered hand to the brown silk cloak.

"You Martha?" he said, and gazed wistfully in her face. "Nay, do not cry. Forgive me, dear. I am older, a long way, than you. I am grown very old and feeble. But it is so much the better for both you and me. Eternal youth is drawing near."

Reluctant, but obedient, the old man turned his back upon his convent, the prior, more aged still, kneeling to ask his blessing on the threshold; and Miss Martha carried him away to the home she had prepared for his reception.

It had been worthy of her love, that thought of making him a nest in the old monastery. It was a spot that had been familiar to his childhood, and as a boy he had delighted to dream among the ruins. His dreams in the place had been to him what poems and fairy tales are to other wonder-loving children. He had lain in the long grass among the graves, and peopled the walls with his fancy. In spirit he had swung the censer, and rung the peal of bells from the belfry. Time had been when his mother, missing him long from home, had found him rapt in prayer among the tombs. A long life had passed over his head since then, of fasting and doing penance, of praying and contem-

plating, of much labour and little rest. And now he had come back here to die. Broken and spent and feeble, but infinitely happy and at peace, the old man had found a home for his last days in the very haunts of his boyhood's dreams.

But at the opening of this story the establishment of the home among the ruins was a thing of old date, and little May was growing up at Monasterlea.

CHAPTER III. FELIX.

LITTLE May Mourne was born in Italy. She made her humble entry into life amidst the sunshine of a Roman summer. Her father had been a painter, younger brother of Martha and Felix, one of those who give up home, country, and friends to follow Art whither she may lead them. She had led him into care and difficulty, had given him hard tasks to do, and bitter bread to eat. He had had too much love, and too little power, and disappointment had broken his heart in the end. May's mother had been a beautiful Roman girl, who had not lived long after the death of her husband. Little May had disported herself in an Italian vineyard until she was five years old. Then the friends of her mother, who were poor people, had yielded to the yearning of Miss Martha, and allowed her to come to Rome and take the child away with her. Miss Martha had left her home in the ruins, her fireside among the tombs, had left old Nanny taking care of Father Felix, and had journeyed to Rome, and returned in triumph with the child. And so the girl, with her soft dark eyes and picturesque ways, had become a part of this curious household. It was like engraving a crimson rose on a wild thorn, to bring little May to Monasterlea.

Miss Martha brought home various other treasures besides the one whose tiny hand was squeezed in hers. She brought a quaint silver lamp, and a picture painted by May's father, both for the little chapel which she had made for Father Felix. For she had roofed in a space off one of the cloisters, and set up an altar, and ornamented the walls. It might have been formerly a chapter-room, or a refectory, or a scriptorium. Now it was a chapel, which May could dress with flowers, and where Felix could pray the day long if he pleased. Ay, and the night long too. Miss Martha had not counted upon this when out of sympathy she humoured him so far. But he would leave his bed, which she had spread so soft, and would pass whole nights upon the stones.

No wonder that such things should be talked about in the country. Father Felix had been received with much welcome by the people. They loved him as a Franciscan friar; for these friars have always been friends of the Irish poor. They loved him, also, for his simple face and gentle sympathetic ways. Now, added to this was the fame of his sanctity, which went forth in whispers among the hills. It was said he could restore the sick by the great strength and faith of his prayers. The poor had no other doctor, and they ran to bring their sick to him. He prayed beside them; long wrestling prayers, which left him utterly exhausted. The sick went away declaring themselves healed, and the old man was carried fainting to his bed.

So he was looked upon as the saint of the country. His fastings, and vigils, and communions with Heaven were talked of at mountain firesides. If people caught a glimpse of his white head moving among the ruined walls, up and down between the rose hedges, they went forward on their journey with a lighter heart. The simple mountain world was the gladder and brighter on account of his coming. Father Felix had become a part of the poetry of the district.

Monasterlea was a very strange home for a child. The stories of the ghosts that walked abroad from twilight in the evening till sunrise in the morning, would have made any ordinary mortal feel uncomfortable. But the inhabitants of this house were not like other people. Miss Martha had no objection to ghosts. They did not harm her, and she was such a hospitable soul, that she was glad to give a shelter to anything, natural or supernatural, that chose to seek a harbour under her roof. She rather liked to think, as she lay in her bed, that her snug fireside, where the warm red ashes glowed all the night through, was a comfort and a refuge for wandering spirits, who, before she lit her hearth upon the spot, must have had a chill, damp time of it during their inevitable vigils.

Then there was old Nanny, to whom ghosts were a delight. She knew more of them than she would like to tell. It was not given to many to see and hear the things that she had seen and heard. She could give form and significance to every shadow on the wall, and could interpret every murmur of the wind. She knew what went on when other folks were asleep. She knew, but she dared not tell. If she did not keep their counsel they would drag her from her bed, and carry her through

the mountains. She should be dashed against every rock, and dipped in every stream that she passed over, whilst being whirled through the air the whole of the long night. So, though the ghosts might come trooping down the cloisters in the darkness, raising their voices, and making a tempest in the corners, though they might meet her face to face in the passages, dash the things about the kitchen, and bend over her and talk to her in her bed, yet of all this and more she dared not tell.

And there was light-hearted Bridget, who was the young housemaid. This lass of the mountains was so laughter-loving that she could afford even to laugh at the ghosts of Monasterlea. Her polished red cheeks would dimple, and her black eyes glitter, to hear the very mention of their fearful freaks. It was her delight to come rushing into the kitchen of a dark evening, panting and laughing, and declaring that the great stone angel had risen up and kissed her, or that a terrible apparition had accosted her in the cloisters and invited her out for a walk. Yet in spite of all the strange influences of the place, the little flower from Italy grew hardily and freshly in the moorland soil.

It was a curious occurrence which first drew little May towards her visionary uncle.

The child had feared him. His looks struck her with awe. She shrank from him, and dreaded to pass the door of his room. Nevertheless, she fretted about him. She wakened in the night and wept to think of him prostrate on the cold flags upon the chapel floor. She mourned to see him touch no food. She hid little cakes in his pocket, hoping that he might find them and eat them.

One night at last she got up in her sleep and made her way through the long dark cloister of the chapel. There was no light within but the glimmer of the sanctuary lamp. The old man believed that he saw a white-robed angel approaching to comfort and bear him company. His cry of surprise awakened the child, who, looking wildly around her, shuddered a few moments, and then fled to him, clinging round his neck in her fear.

The old friar soothed her kindly. Absent-minded as he was, he could not but gather from her sobbing account that anxiety and sympathy for him had caused her to wander in her sleep. He carried her in his arms to her chamber door. Next morning she flew to meet him with smiles: and the

blooming little maiden and the aged ascetic became the fastest of simple-hearted friends.

And thus out of its many odd elements Miss Martha's household contrived to make a cheerful and harmonious whole. As for her, she had her farm to attend to; and her house and her servants, besides her two children, Felix and May. She was a very happy woman, who felt herself a power for the protection of the weak. She had known what it was to lead a lonely life; but now she was in right good company.

NOISES.

"Be not afraid; the isle is full of noises." Yes; and not only the enchanted home of Prospero, but the whole habitable globe, and prosaic, work-a-day life itself, are noise-ful.

I am speaking only, now, of the noises of common life; of those of the street, the house, the workshop, and the field; and, knowing them to be as innumerable as the hairs on the head, or the sands in the glass, you will not complain if, within the narrow space at my disposal, I only fabulate and comment upon a very few. For there are "sounds and sweet airs that give delight, and hurt not;" and, sometimes, "a thousand twangling instruments will hum about our ears;" and sometimes there are utterances savage and discordant as those of Brute Caliban, when the Spirits pinched him for bringing wood in slowly; or, light and joyous as those of the Dainty Ariel; or, hoarse and drunken as those of Trinculo; or, solemn and sonorous as those of the Royal Magician; or, low and melodious as those of Ferdinand wooing Miranda. Every one of these vocal phases is susceptible of a thousand subdivisions. In the organ of love alone there are myriads more stops than ever Father Schmidt dreamt of; and Swift's "little language" to Stella is no more the same piccolo as Steele's twitterings to his "Prue" than the tremendous compass of diapason in Mirabeau's outpourings to Sophie is identical with the passionate wail of Heloise to Abelard.

Then, let me come to the common noises, and, in a brief span, endeavour to discern which are the sounds usually most agreeable, and most unpleasant to humanity. I say "usually;" for I think there is a tolerable unanimity among us as to sounds which please the ear, and sounds which jar upon it. There are deep-rooted prejudices, almost monomaniacal in their tendency, in certain peculiarly constituted organisa-

laid down with respect to our friend with the peremptory rat-tat. In the country the postman's knock is generally a boon; in town it is generally a bore. Nine young people out of ten like to hear the postman's knock; eleven out of a dozen of middle-aged people wish the General Post Office and its employés at Jericho; and—now that post-cards are established—at Hong Kong, to boot.

The noise of Baby is unmistakably one that cannot be dogmatised upon: save to this extent, that to all women the cries of *all* infants are delicious. Childless men would like to burke baby; Paterfamilias winces under the torture, but endures it smilingly. One bachelor, indeed, I once knew, and a remarkably crusty bachelor he was—I will call him Mr. Ferox—who professed to take huge delight in the uproar of the nursery. "I like to hear babies cry," he would say, with a hideous grin; "but then I like to hear a pig being killed, and a schoolboy being caned. *They're all suffering. Why do babies cry? Because they've got the stomach-ache. They're suffering, ha! ha!*"

The noise of a grand pianoforte. Humph! The point is moot again. Stay. A pianoforte in your own house, or over the way, may be tolerable. But next door, with a very thin partition-wall, and the performer yet in the rudimentary stages of the valse from Faust. Horror! With regard to the accordion, and its sister-fiend the concertina, I can only regard them as instruments of which the possession should not be permitted by the Law of the Land. Nay; I regard the accordion as remotely an immoral instrument. Note this, that whenever a shopboy robs the till, or a junior clerk embezzles the petty cash, it is invariably discovered that among the articles purchased by the criminal from his ill-gotten funds, have been a pistol and an accordion. To dismiss musical noises, I may hazard a suspicion, that most of us have a furtive fondness for the banjo. The truth is, that the banjo is a kind of lute, and the lute is a kind of fiddle: the most exquisite of musical instruments, and one whose notes awaken nothing but mirth, and jollity, and sympathy, and gratitude in the human breast. It was upon a fiddle that old Timotheus played when he made Alexander weep at the recital of the woes of Darius. It was with the sweet notes of a fiddle that Orpheus charmed the brutes, and won Eurydice back from Hades. It was not, as the legends idly relate, the retrospection of Orpheus that caused him

to lose his wife again. 'Twas Eurydice's fault. The imprudent young woman had acquired a piano under the "three years' system," and looking back for it was seized upon by Pluto, and relegated to Tartarean shades for ever.

There are some very beautiful noises at sea. The voice of the waves is to my ear always eloquent, and, moreover, even when the sea is at its roughest, always friendly. It is very good on a sea voyage to linger late on deck, and listen to the noise of the waters churning among the paddle-wheels; it is very good to look down into the engine-room and listen to the labouring of the mighty cylinders, the dull thud of the piston-rods; the rasping of the fuel, shovelled to and fro; the clanging of the furnace doors. That is the kind of "machinery in motion" I like. Yet sea-life has its ugly noises. That awful yawning and creaking of every joist, and panel, and plank in your cabin during a gale! That dreadful noise of the sailors' holystoning the deck at early morning! That abominable grinding, tumbling, grumbling screw—a giant worm, which seems to be corkscrewing itself through your vitals—a worm that will not die until it has propelled the good ship to the destined haven.

The noises of the country are so numerous, that I should require many more pages than the Conductor of this journal would be willing to allot to me, for a bare mention of one tithe of the commonest rural sounds. But pray note this, and remember that although I may be a Goth, a Vandal, or a Hun, I claim at least the merit of candour. I am not an enthusiastic admirer of the nightingale, and deem him, indeed, a very overrated songster. I prefer the blackbird; and I would give a hundred nightingales, if I had them, for one lark. After this it will not astonish you to be told that I think the frog a very harmless little fellow, whose croaking is always cheerful, and is sometimes even harmonious, and that I utterly detest the much-vaunted lowing of kine. That lowing seems to me the most despairing moan possible of conception. It seems to say, "What have we done, these many thousands of years past, that we are never to be anything more than Beef?" A sheep has a brief chance of felicity as a pet lamb. But nobody pets a calf. We fatten him up against the time when the Prodigal Son shall come home.

As regards pigs "in extremis," I have already recorded the dictum of Ferox; but ere the fiat has gone forth for their conversion into pork, the noises of the curly-tailed

race are very comfortable to hear. In the cottage from whose back garden you hear the complacent grunting of Piggy, you may be sure that the ice-pudding of starvation is not the staple dish.

I hate cats, and will say nothing about either their purring, their mewling, or their swearing sounds; but, touching dogs—the majority of whose noises are much loved by mankind—I think that one of the most appalling, sickening and shameful sounds it is possible to hear, is the long drawn out howl of anguish of a dog that has been kicked by some brute of a human being.

There is much to be said about bells; but it depends very much on the character of the bell, whether we affect it or not. The school-bell gives out as disagreeable a sound to a boy as the passing-bell does to an old man. The sound of church-going bells in the country is exceedingly sweet to hear. In London, church-going bells are—I say it with all due deference—a grievous and a painfully increasing nuisance. Joy-bells and wedding-bells are very nice to hear, no doubt; when *you* have anything to be joyful for, or when somebody of whom you are very fond is going to be married. Indeed, I have heard of folks so charitable as to rejoice at the sound of their enemies' wedding-bells.

On the whole, considering noises broadly, I hold that the two merriest and most consoling sounds of common life are the squeak of PUNCH and the clink of a blacksmith working at his forge. The "Rooty, tooty, tooty, toi-o-i," means harmless, honest, unsophisticated gaiety:—the "sunshine of the breast," the lightness of heart of which not all the grim ascetics that ever preached shall ever deprive humanity, and the "Clink, clink, clink," the blast of the bellows, the roar of the fire, mean Work, cheerful, robust, productive Work, obedient to Heaven's command, and bringing Heaven's bread.

NOVEL NAMES.

THERE is no quotation for which we feel so decided a repulsion, as that well-lacked quotation, that blunt, bent, jagged old saw, which works laboriously,—“What's in a name?” Your “Foolometer” when busy with the rude carpentry he calls conversation, delights to rasp and flourish with this instrument. How many a snug, bald-headed, shining-faced bore has served up this quotation, “all hot,” as though it were a rare, even a new dish: “What's in a

name?” to be surely followed by a complacent smile or laugh.

And nobody really agrees with the Divine William on this point. The gentleman who exchanged Bugg for “Norfolk Howard,” did not go with the bard; and we have all rather a weakness for a fair-sounding title. But there are two classes who differ “the whole sky” from the bard (or swan), and would intrude into that delicious garden scene with a serious protest. The answer of the public and the publishers to the question and following explanation, “What's in a name? the rose by any other name would smell as sweet,” would be bluntly that “the name was everything;” that all young ladies fling down contemptuously on the counter the work that Messrs. Smiths' assistant offers, if it be furnished with a disagreeable title. In this case, though the rose may smell as sweet, no one will take the trouble to smell it.

It is difficult to analyse this feeling. Though we may be pleasant on the novel-reading young ladies, the impression affects even the sage and whiskered pundit. The truth is, we confide, and always will confide, in human nature. We assume that the story and its title will faithfully reflect each other. They rarely do, however, for, as a rule, when the last chapter is “knocked off,” the author devises half a dozen good titles, one of which is chosen after experiment and debate; chiefly in the test of its effect on the publisher, possibly a plain man, who says “I like that,” or “I don't like that at all.” The more flashy and sensational the better the effect. Sometimes, in the case of a serial story, the name has to be selected “at the other end,” before the story has fairly started; but here again it has little relation to the subject matter, as the title is selected before the story has been written.

The philosophy of novel-writing might fairly engage the speculation of a mind like that of Mr. John Stuart Mill, and with this philosophy the theory of names is not indistinctly connected. The list of writers is now swelled to hundreds, and why the most feeble-minded of either sex thinks he or she can sit down and tell a story, and secure an audience to listen, seems incomprehensible. The evil, however, will soon cure itself, for where all are story-tellers, the difficulty will be to find those who will listen. In the competition for an audience, titles are at a premium, and the ingenious variety of nomenclature, as Doctor Johnson might phrase it, more than compensates for other deficiencies. An analysis of a vast

mass of provender for about three or four months, as supplied by the most eminent of the forage contractors to the novel-reading public, furnishes some principles in what seems a sort of chaos, where every writer appears to be plunging desperately to secure the most extravagant title he can. These nomenclators are therefore compelled to range themselves under distinct categories, though they are perhaps not aware of it. After all, the description of human emotions and actions is more or less founded on fixed principles, and accordingly we find that the story-teller has a choice of five courses. First, he takes the shortest and easiest, and gives his narrative some christian name. Secondly, he bethinks himself of some striking situation or position in life which that character fills, and makes a title out of that. Thirdly, he bethinks him of a proverb, or of some proverbial expression. Fourthly, he extracts a moral warning from his book; and, fifthly, becomes grotesque, and devises some fantastic sentence which is neither bitter, nor moral, nor proverb, but reminds one of the advertisement, "Watch this frame." Now, the first class, the simple christian name, is by far the most popular. The lady writers are specially partial to it. Female names are particularly in favour. Thus we have Hannah, Edith, Polly, Hetty, Patty, Fanny, Daisy Nichol, Dorothy Fox, Estelle Russell, Esther West, Anne Furness, Bessy Raine, Janie, and a host more. Men are also in favour. Arthur, John, Hugh, Claude, with Harry Disney and Gerald Hastings. The places, too, where these ladies and gentlemen reside and carry on a part of their operations is also found useful, and thus we are introduced to Drayton Hall, Durnton Abbey, Earls Dene, Dene Hollow, Ashcliffe Hall, Ferneyhurt Court, and other ancestral residences. The House of Percival and the House of Elmore have more a traditional interest, while the Home in Town has rather a metropolitan flavour. Many explanatory titles are naturally found: the Canon's Daughters, the Agent of Broom-warren, the Carylls, the Heir Expectant, the Heiress in Her Minority, the Rector's Daughter, Doctor Jacob, and many more. This is a simple straightforward way of going to work; and a number of quiet, easy-going readers rather relish such titles, as being significant of something like what some neighbouring gossip would come in and retail. The adventures of Mary and Hannah promise something decorous, moral, and agreeable. Fairly to

be included in this inviting class are those titles which ring their changes on somebody's wife, as Edward's Wife, Percy's Wife, James Gordon's Wife, which by anticipation gives a picture of calm, conjugal bliss. These gentlemen are certain to turn out bookish, poetical men, worshipped by their ladies, but misunderstood, perhaps, and suffering in consequence. We can almost see James Gordon and Percy and Edward, one of whom at least must be a clergyman, preaching in a rich, full voice. There is the Doctor's Wife to keep the other ladies company.

Next comes something more particular, and significant of the whole tone of the story. As, *Artiste*, *A Brave Lady*, *My Beautiful Lady*, *By Birth a Lady*; and it is curious how a small crop of titles spring up nearly the same. Thus some one devised *Her Lord and Master*, and we find near it *Her Title of Honour*, and *Her Own Fault*. We have the pleasure of knowing *Lady Flora*, when we find *Lady Judith* waiting to receive us, and should not neglect *Lady Wedderburn's Wish*. *Fair Passions* and *Fairly Won* describe the tone of the story; so do *Family Pride*, *Influence*, *Marquis and Merchant*, and *Maggie's Secret*. Some one thinks of *My Heroine*, perhaps, from talking of her at the family breakfast table, when an imitator at once caps it with *My Hero*. The field, indeed, in this descriptive direction is very vast. But we next come to what may be termed "the morally proverbial" class. To this we owe *Behind the Veil*, *Ropes of Sand*, *Checkmate*, *Bitter is the Rind*, *Caught in the Toils*, *Contraband*, *Far Above Rubies*, *Gone Like a Shadow*, the *Green-eyed Monster*, *Against Time*, *For Lack of Gold*, and *For Very Life*, *Schooled with Briars*, *Sentenced by Fate*, *Recommended to Mercy*, *Broken to Harness*, *A Life's Assize*; all are of the same species; so is *Cruel as the Grave*.

Some titles betoken a quality, as *Love and Valour*, *Love and Ambition*, *Love or Hatred*, *Lovers' Vows*, *Love Me Little Love Me Long*, the *Lover Upon Trial*, &c. Some one wrote a work entitled *Only a Commoner*. Pendants can be found in *Only a Woman's Hair*, *Only George*, and *Only an Ensign*. We have *Ralph the Heir* and *Ralph the Bailiff* in awkward but not unfrequently natural proximity. *Baronets* and *lords* abound, *Sir Harry Hotspur* and *Sir Richard*, *Lord Lynne's Wife*, *Lord Falconberg's Heir*, make genteel company, who can hobnob with the *Squire Arden* and the *Squire of Brudenell*. *Sister Martha*

can pair off with Sister Mary. Truly Noble and True to Herself are of the same kind.

But we have reserved the most grotesque category for the last, which comprises interrogations and bold statements. Thus we have of the first kind: Is Lady Clara Dead? Will He Escape? Ought We to Visit Her? Of the second we have Red as a Rose is She, Cometh Up as a Flower, What She Could, What Her Face Said (this is the drollest of all), and What She Did with Her Life. Finally, we have what the novels rarely tell—How it Came to Pass.

A BLACK FROST.

No gleam of sunlight warms the leaden sky
With faintest tinge of gold. A murky pall
O'erspreads the horizon, and with biting blast
The east wind keen makes cottage casements creak,
And in the rick-yard whirls the wheaten straws,
Malignant in its sport.

The farmer's boy,
With blue, pinched face, and fingers red and chill,
Plods shivering through the fields toward his home,
Where ruddy fire, and bowl of porridge-milk,
And mother's smile, and happy childhood's sheet,
Shall herald night, and close the ungenial day.

Hard, bare, and black, and adamant the earth;
Cold, black and chill, and lustreless the sky;
Nor man nor beast comes forth this eve to dare
The keen-toothed wind. The warren'd rabbits lie
Suug in their burrows, and the ivied wall
Is full of shivering, feathered fugitives;
The nooks and crannies of the old barn hide
Sparrows, and bats, and jackdaws. Cattle crouch
Close in their litter 'neath the cowhouse walls,
And panting sheep, together packed for warmth,
Bleat 'neath the red-tiled shed: the homestead cock,
Long since, amid his dames, hath sought the perch,
At earliest symptom of the waning light.
Rest, warmth and rest, the whole creation seeks,
And men and maids sit by the in-door hearth;
Cheerless and comfortless is all without,
Relentless, icy, grim, and pitiless,
The iron grip of Frost is on the earth.

THE BLUEBOTTLE FLY.

A FRENCH ART-STUDENT'S STORY.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

HAVE you faith in the mysterious which binds the seemingly loose and incoherent links of man's destiny together? Do you believe that the thread with which our fate is woven is spun in one unbroken length, on which the events of our lives are threaded one by one? If so, you will not be surprised to find in me another proof of a great result arising from an almost imperceptible cause, for while some men are borne to fortune on the wings of love, and others soar to fame upon the eagle pinions of ambition, I was carried to the very summit of my hopes, and to the fulfilment of my most ambitious

dreams, upon the wings of a—BLUEBOTTLE FLY!

No position could be more painful and trying than that in which my mother was left at my father's death. The small pension allotted by government to officers' widows would have been scarcely sufficient to maintain herself without the strictest economy, and I have often wondered at the daily miracles she must have been called upon to perform, in order to feed and clothe the great idle hungry boy with whose education and nourishment Providence had burdened her. To speak truth, I must have been a burden indeed, for I seemed destined to thwart her hopes in every way. She had set her heart upon my admission to the dignity of office under my uncle, the boursicotier, and the worthy man had consented to try me; but as all the labour and goodwill were on his side he was fain to dismiss me as totally unfit for the profession. So my poor mother was compelled to let me follow the bent of my inclination, and become a painter, the only condition she imposed upon me being that of attendance at the most reputable studio in Paris. This was not difficult, for everybody knew that old Rabâche, the great historical painter, deficient in every quality which makes the artist, lacked not one of those which make respectability, being a worthy citizen, an excellent national guard, and a punctual taxpayer. So to old Rabâche was I consigned. Perhaps by this arrangement I was made to suffer even more than if my mother had refused to countenance my pursuit of art altogether, for my soul was given up to nature, and I had been all my life subject to the same nervous excitement at sight of the green fields and waving forests as I have heard portrait painters declare seizes upon them whenever they behold a face more lovely than usual, or when they stand before Saint Somebody at the Louvre, or General Somebody else at the Exhibition. But I durst not utter any objection to the line of art my mother had chosen, for fear of strengthening the secret hope she still entertained of my being coaxed or disgusted into acceptance of the place in my uncle's office after all.

And so I went on daubing and stippling with small imagination and but little courage, until I completed a study of a girl at which my fellow-students had often laughed while I was at work upon it. The pale brow and flaxen hair had been painted through my tears at the thought of the

bright landscapes, the glorious Oriental sunrise, the golden sunsets I longed to study and paint, instead of the eternal studio models to which I was condemned. This feeling of discontent and disappointment must have influenced me as I went daubing on; for when the study was completed, and the pale girl with the yellow hair, amid which rested a single knot of dark red velvet, looked out from the canvas with deeply sorrowful expression, the students all set up a mournful howl, declaring that it was the picture of a ghost, and made the atmosphere of the studio turn chilly, and the very sunlight appear cold and blue. And they danced in a ring round the easel where it rested until my head reeled again with the noise, and my heart sickened with fear lest in their mad demonstrations they might destroy the work; for bad as I felt assured it must be, I yet looked upon it with a kind of paternal attachment. Although my confidence in the honour of my fellow-students was unbounded, I felt not the slightest security in their forbearance, and knew well enough that their love of fun was uncontrollable; so just by way of precaution, nothing more, I lingered that day last of all at the studio, and bore away, unperceived, the Study of a Girl, which in my own mind I had romantically denominated *Une Poitrine*, in anticipation of seeing it one day figure under that title in the catalogue of the Exhibition, and carried it home with the oddest mixture of shame and self-contentment ever met together in the same mind.

But the effect produced by the work upon my mother was far different from that expressed by the students. When displayed that evening after supper, placed against the back of a chair with our little lamp before it, and the table withdrawn in order to give it distance, it was received with the loudest expressions of enthusiasm. My mother could not look upon it without tears, and old Babette, our *femme de ménage*, whose eyes were already red with peeling onions, afforded the highest expression of emotion of which she was capable, by blowing her nose repeatedly with a shock more powerful than usual.

My mother's admiration, however, was not only poetical, but practical in this case; for no sooner had I departed for the studio on the morrow than she hastened to carry my picture to the colour-shop in the next street, and by dint of prayers and wheedling achieved a feat which I should never have dared even to hint at. She actually prevailed upon the cross-grained old shop-keeper to

exhibit the picture in his window amongst the ghastly specimens of flowers, fruit, and "still life," generally with which it had been encumbered ever since I could remember. The old fellow furnished the studio with canvas and colours, and my mother had hoped to do a stroke of business by getting him to take my *poitrine* in payment of my bill. But the bare proposition had caused such an explosion of ire on his part that she had hurried out of the shop in fright, lest he should repent him of the privilege already accorded.

The walls of our dwelling (enclosing three rooms and a kitchen, high up in the clouds) were filled with dear mother's renown when I returned home in the evening, and Babette was literally trumpeting forth the praises of madame from behind the checked pocket-handkerchief, and giving vent to a torrent of eloquence upon the subject while skimming the pot au feu, which was bubbling, steaming and savoury, upon the hearth. I own to a joyful surprise on my own part, although, of course, I was too dignified to allow any symptom of this feeling to be discerned. I kept my pride and self-satisfaction within bounds until after supper, when, having sufficiently resisted my mother's pressing request, I yielded at length, and ran round the corner to see how beautiful the picture looked in the shop window by lamplight. But as no foolish feminine impatience was to be exhibited, although I was suffering from the most intense curiosity to behold the grateful sight, I had courage enough to wait until the meal was over, and then, walking with steady footsteps across the landing, I rushed down the stairs in frantic haste, and by the time I got to the corner shop my heart beat with such tumult that I could not distinguish the objects spread out in the window. How great was my disappointment, however, when, on looking round, I failed to perceive my work. There, on one side, was the flower piece, a peony in a tumbler. It had hung there for years. There was the barbel, reposing on a marble slab, with a cut lemon lying near, and the hunch of bread beside it. But in the centre, where my mother declared that she had seen the picture placed before she left the shop, there was nothing more than the usual assortment of lithographic drawings of animals and the bundles of graduated pencils. All these must have been coeval with myself, but I never heard of their having been bargained for by any customer, nor even dusted by their owner. But in vain did I look to right and left. No

trace of my poitrineaire did I see, and the disappointment was so great that some time elapsed ere I could summon courage enough to enter the shop and inquire the cause.

The old fellow was serving a customer at the moment of my entrance. Without looking up from the parcel he was tying, he made me a sign to wait; and I stood, already humbled and abashed, before him, in full expectation that it was to talk to me about my bill that he wished me to stay, and I entirely forgot my picture in the search after some good and plausible excuse for the unavoidable delay in payment. But no sooner had the customer departed than the old curmudgeon's eye brightened up, and he extended his hand across the counter towards me, an honour he had never vouchsafed to me before during all the long years I had known him.

"Here," said he; "I have news. You are more lucky than wise. At last I am beginning to have hopes of you."

He fumbled in the till, while my heart beat with violence, and my fingers clutched nervously at the buckle of my leather-belt. But the old miser was far from feeling the same excitement. He went on mumbling in the coolest manner possible, while he continued his search in the till, picking out all the gold pieces, and sorting them with care.

"I sold your picture this afternoon," said he, abruptly, while I was so overcome at the announcement that I was fain to lean against the counter for support. "I saw you looking for it in the window. Ha, ha! I thought it would do you good to be kept a little moment in suspense. All you boys at Rabâche's want taking down a peg or two. And, mind you, your skeleton beauty has not been sold for any merit of its own, but simply because an old lady, returning from church, was so struck with the likeness of your portrait to a grand-daughter she lost some little time ago, that she actually purchased it, and paid for it on the spot. She was, indeed, in such a hurry to possess it, that she made the tall lackey who accompanied her carry it home under his arm. Thank Heaven, I know my trade, and when I saw the tears fall like rain upon the picture, I was moved to such a degree that I just run up the price to double the value of the miserable experiment. And here is your bill receipted. What do you think of that?—besides these two pieces over and above. And you may thank your stars, my lad, that the old woman's sight is failing her; for how else

would she have bought the daub without bargaining?"

Need I describe the tumult of joy which hails the student's first success? Those two five-franc pieces represented but a small proportion of the sum required for our weekly expenditure; they would have gone for nothing in our rent, and yet to me they spoke of independence—a future of honest toil—a life of freedom. I knew the fellow was a rogue, but that was of little import just then. I clutched the money greedily, and rushed out of the shop without uttering a single word of thanks, for I felt that if I had essayed to speak, I should have burst into tears! I rushed homewards at a tearing pace. The first money I had ever earned! The first five-franc piece I had ever taken to my mother! Hope, pride, ambition were all astir within me.

If my emotion was so great at handling my two five-franc pieces, you can judge of that experienced by my mother. As she had wept with tenderness and pity on beholding the picture, so did she weep with joy at beholding the money it had produced. She was sure the old colourman had defrauded me of several hundreds—nay, thousands—of francs; even hinting at the probability of his having kept the picture as a speculation of his own, and ended by persuading herself that he would one day make his fortune out of the pale girl with the dark red ribbon in her hair. I valiantly handed to her at once the whole of this my first-born gain, but she, as valiant as myself, pressed one of the five-franc pieces to her lips before she dropped it into the pocket of her apron, and placed the other in my hand, saying almost solemnly as she did so:

"Do what you choose with this, my darling. They say that the first money of a young man's earning is the key to the golden gate of fortune, and, according to the manner in which it is turned in the lock, so is the young man's destiny decided." And looking fondly into my face she held up the large uncouth silver five-franc piece betwixt her finger and thumb, and adding, in a coaxing tone, "Now what is the dream you would love best to realise with this?"

Well, my first thought was of a little present to herself, a treat to the second gallery of the Théâtre Français, or a dinner at the Barrière de l'Etoile, or a drive to the Bois de Boulogne; but I looked abroad—the night was so fine—the air came so sweet and pure, laden with the balmy odours of summer through the window of our mansarde, and gave such

promise of a fair morrow, that selfish and inconsiderate as we men always are, I resisted no longer, and burst out as I stretched my arm towards the horizon:

"Well then, mother dear, if this be really the key to the gate of fortune, let me spend it in a day's holiday in the country; let me wander alone in the woods just above Mendon—you know, mother, *quite alone!*"

She has told me since that the choice I had made with this condition had given her so sharp a pang, that she wondered I did not perceive the start with which she received it. But selfish as usual, I was too much absorbed with the idea whence had originated the desire I had expressed, and which had been burning within me for a long time, and I added, more in answer to the thought that was passing through my own mind than with any reference to the remark she had made:

"And besides, mother dear, I feel sure that something *will* happen to me on this very day."

My mother said not a word in reply, but bade me go to bed at once if I wished to rise betimes, and hurried into the kitchen under pretence of preparing the little provision which should prevent my five-franc piece from melting away too rapidly, and also to hide the disappointment which the somewhat brutal expression of my wish to go alone had occasioned her.

And I did rise betimes on the morrow, and stole down the stairs as quietly as possible to avoid arousing my mother, although I knew by the deep sigh she uttered as I passed by her door that she was awake; but, filled with my own intense anticipation of enjoyment, with the beauty of the morning, and the prospect of a day's liberty in the woods, I contented myself with kissing my hand in the direction of her chamber as I passed the door, not without a coward fear lest she should seek to delay my departure by her over-care for my comfort. Never before had I hurried so swiftly down that dark old staircase since the day when as a turbulent gamin I had been wont to slide down the iron balustrade, and not until the porter had drawn the bolt, and the heavy gate had groaned upon its hinges as it swung open, did I begin to consider myself a free man.

It was scarcely four o'clock. One or two workmen moving along with stolid pace beneath their load of tools to their work upon the river, here and there a drunkard reeling home, and holding by the shutters as he passed, were all the pas-

sengers abroad at that early hour. Perhaps it was just as well for me, for I must have presented a strange appearance as I hurried along the silent streets with my huge portfolio flapping at my back, my colour-box hanging at my side, and a tin roller slung across my breast filled with my coloured chalks and pencils. So great was my enthusiasm, that I had made preparation for this single day's holiday as though I were about to spend the year in wandering through the virgin forests of Brazil. I had filled my portfolio with sheets upon sheets of coarse paper for outline, and a sketching-board, and scraps for foreground, and several brochures on perspective by the most approved authors, and the various methods of handling mountain, plain, or river scenery. The colour-box was equally well filled, and so was the tin roller, so that had I been lost in the woods I should have had wherewithal to appease the cravings of my imagination, if not those of my stomach, for many weeks to come.

But, as I bounded joyously along, the flapping and jingling and rattling of the implements of my calling discoursed sweet music to my ear, and formed a fitting accompaniment to the joy which overflowed my soul, and I laughed aloud in answer to the clamour, hurrying forward at a brisker pace for the mere sake of creating a noisier sound. The dark, old, muddy, narrow street was soon left behind, and away I strode until the barrier was gained, and I found myself at last out on the high road—stone-paved in the middle to be sure, but bordered on either side with open fields and trees and hedgerows and low fences, behind which the cottages, still closed and silent, seemed awaiting the first ray of the early sunlight to awaken them from slumber. The dingy shadows of the cold, dark, dirty chimneys as seen from our garret window had given place to the glowing blue morning sky, the rattling of the wooden candles, which hung over the grocer's door opposite, was replaced by the rustling of the branches overhead, and the fluttering of the coloured stuffs hung out upon the dyer's pole next door, to the waving of the long feathery clematis, tossed by the breeze from the summit of the high walls and over the hedges by the wayside.

I had reached Clamart before the sun was high, so quickly had I walked. Here I turned up the street leading to a gate of the wood and sat myself down before the stone bench outside the door of the little wineshop well known amongst artists as the *Modèle*

des Modèles, being kept by an ancient model familiar to every studio in Paris, whose cognomen of Père Ajax had been acquired by the success with which he had stood for that personage in the famous group of Cassandra. The hour was still too early for business, and as I was spreading out my store of cold bouilli, radishes, and gruyère beside me upon the bench, Père Ajax himself came clattering down the steps with his wooden sabots and cotton nightcap to open the shutters, to display to the light of day the provision of dusty bottles and broken coffee-cups which adorned the window, and to sweep the path in front of the door, still strewn with the faded acacia flowers and green chestnut husks, brought in by the students returning from the wood the evening before. Although but that moment risen from his bed, the Père Ajax was quite as much disposed for rest as though he had been undergoing a hard day's toil, and so he sat himself down at the other end of the stone bench, and began to question me as usual concerning the artistic news of the studio, not forgetting to fetch a litre of petit bleu, of which I drank heartily—strong as it was, and unused as I had ever been to drinking—so exhausted had I become with the length of my walk, and the pace at which I had proceeded. It was a pleasure to Père Ajax to watch the morsels, little and big, square, oblong, or three-cornered, as they disappeared down my throat with the quickness of lightning. It was a pleasure to me also to behold Père Ajax leaning on his birch-broom, as he listened with the most intense interest to my story of the first sale I had ever accomplished; but when I told him the use to which I had destined my first earnings he became enthusiastic.

"Ah, mon garçon," exclaimed he, "if I were free as in the good old times, I would go with you, and what a jolly quiet day we should have together up in the woods! Never saddle yourself with encumbrances. If I could only leave the house to the care of my dear Euphrosyne! But no, it would never do—on the very day, too, when Tony Lanterneau starts his new coucou. No, no, I must stay. You know young Tony, the handsome groom at the Cloche d'Or. No? Well he starts a new venture to-day, a brand-new coucou, to ply between Clamart and Meudon for the accommodation of the painters who prefer the road through the wood to the dusty highway; the cool shady paths to the heat and hurry of the railroad. A clever fellow that Tony, he will be sure to succeed. The

women all dote on him so. He is to stop at this door for passengers and parcels. No, no, it would be imprudent to leave the house to the sole care of my dear Euphrosyne."

Just as Père Ajax had finished his bewailing, a hoarse impatient cry was heard upon the road, accompanied by an irritating jingle of brass bells, and presently loomed upon the sight Tony Lanterneau's new coucou. And, sure enough, brilliant it was in the extreme; the wheels of brightest yellow, the body of intensest blue, and on each side a winged Cupid flying from a cloud, with a rose far bigger than his head waving in his extended hand. The curtains fluttered in the breeze; they were of red and white striped calico, and added greatly to the showy appearance of the vehicle. But there was something listless and disconsolate in the trot of the old white horse as he floundered down the hill, kicking the stones to right and left, and something ominous in the silence of the driver, as he sat alone upon the swinging board in front. And when the coucou drew up to the door of the Modèle des Modèles, Tony jumped from his seat with forlorn and sheepish looks, which but ill-accorded with his own gay appearance and the highly-ornamented style of the coucou. It was evident the poor fellow was not in the best of humours, for when Père Ajax pressed forward triumphantly to welcome the customers he supposed to be concealed behind the striped calico curtains which floated so gaily round the coucou, he was driven back rather angrily by Tony, who uttered an impatient malediction on his ill-luck, for he had arrived from Paris without a single passenger! All the golden promises of the students had vanished into the air, and he had been most cruelly deceived by them all. As usual, however, vanity spoke even louder than self-interest; for, although the pecuniary loss was painful enough, it was as nothing compared to the mortification of being compelled to drive into Meudon in this forlorn state.

"If I had only a 'lapin,'" exclaimed he in despair, "only just one, to share the swing-board, nobody need have known that we are empty within. I shall have to pick up some beggar on the road, or else I shall become the laughing-stock of the girls, who will be out to see me drive up the high street. If you were not so well known, Père Ajax, I would ask you to be my lapin, but they would all know you to be a passenger of straw."

Here a sudden light broke in upon Père Ajax, and he exclaimed, as he slapped me on the shoulder :

"Well, my boy, never despair, here is your lapin already unburrowed. Here is a young fellow going on to Mendon. I warrant me he won't be sorry to get a cheap ride instead of having to walk up that confounded hill, all harnessed and caparisoned as he is." And he laughed as he gave my tin roller a tap with the handle of the broom upon which he was still leaning, and made me reel backwards with the shock. Tony looked at me wistfully ; my personal appearance was everything that could be desired for the purpose. I was young, new to that part of the world, and an artist. On my own part I was nothing loth to profit by the opportunity. I had walked too fast for the same degree of exertion to be possible after the hearty meal I had been making. Reflection came in aid of digestion, and I accepted joyfully the seat on the swing-board by the side of Tony Lanterneau, who, when he had tossed off his *petit verre*, jumped up joyously beside me, and drove away down the hill at a far more joyous pace for having the additional load. The bells jingled again, but with a more brisk and lively peal, the wheels creaked and clattered with a more sharp, determined sound, the badger's tail on the old horse's forehead wagged to and fro with a more frolicsome motion, and we got under way with every prospect of a pleasant drive. The sun was now getting high, the dust lay ankle deep upon the pathway, the woods were still silent—the road we were pursuing belongs almost exclusively to the holiday-making grisettes and students of the Pays Latin, whose frolics cannot commence until after lectures and working hours—and none were abroad as yet to enjoy the beauty of the morning. The birds alone had begun their merry chatter, and although the dew lay still in glittering drops upon the tall grass which bordered the woods, the shade was already acceptable. The hill was steep. Tony had observed that there was no need for haste ; he owned to having vexed and worried the poor old horse in his rage, and was now disposed to let him have his ease, and suffered the reins to hang loosely on his neck while he told me all his grievances. We were just reaching the top of the hill, Tony was finishing his doleful tale, my digestion was being painfully completed, the *petit bleu* was thumping and bumping most riotously on the top of my head, making it feel of unusual weight and size.

All these elements mingled together were fast beginning to produce their usual result in slumber, to which I was about to yield, when I was suddenly aroused by a loud shout, followed by an injunction to stop, and presently a man emerged from beneath the overhanging branches of the wood, rushed to the horse's head, and seized the bit with a sudden violence that sent the creature back upon his haunches, and in a confused jargon, one mass of spluttering, stammering, and stuttering, occasioned by over anxiety and want of breath, he managed to make us understand that our help was needed. An accident had occurred at a short distance from the road. Tony, who was good natured by temperament, and curious by nature, readily undertook to lend the assistance required, and obeyed the summons with all the more alacrity that he scented a job as the result of the disaster.

And he was not mistaken. The gentleman was sent by Providence, the accident was of Heaven's own design. This Tony never for a moment doubted, when, after having rapidly told the story of the adventure which had befallen the party of gentlemen he had accompanied from Paris, the breaking-down of the hackney-coach which had brought them, the departure of one of the party in search of another vehicle to convey them to their destination, the stranger ended by bidding him name his own terms to drive them with all speed to the Three Acacias, in the middle of the wood, where people were waiting for them with the greatest impatience. The stranger was peremptory ; he would take no refusal ; the haste was great, the necessity most pressing. Tony's head was turned ; his one single passenger—myself—must be sacrificed, and the turn of luck was so unexpected to the poor disappointed speculator of the coucou, that he hesitated not for an instant to make the sacrifice, and did it, too, without a murmur of regret, simply observing :

"You see, monsieur, in what an unfortunate position I am placed."

But what cared I whither the Fates were about to lead me ? The Three Acacias or anywhere else, so long as my steps were bent to the greenwood. Besides, I had grown downright weary since I had been resting in the coucou. The *petit bleu* was bubbling on my brain, and my head ached tremendously. And so I vastly preferred being driven onwards by Tony Lanterneau to the fatigue of walking up the hill, a task for which I felt that I was

no longer fitted. We turned, therefore, into the wood, the stranger leading the horse, and bumping the coucou over the grass clumps and sand hillocks without mercy. I had leisure to examine him as he walked before us. He was a tall, stiff-looking individual, with an exaggeration of military swagger; his hat was set jauntily on one side, and his hair cropped close, while his moustache was tremendously exuberant, which gave a coarse brutality to the expression of his countenance, according well with the rest of his person. He was attired in a tight-fitting coat with low collar, and his nether garments, of white corded stuff, were strapped and tightened over thick heavy boots. Nothing about him betokened the gentleman, and yet his pretension to military rank was evident. Before I could make up my mind as to his social position, we had come upon the scene of the disaster. A hackney-coach was lying on its side, overturned in a ditch; the coachman was standing by the horses, which had been unharnessed, and a young man was seated amongst the tall grass and flowers on a rising bank, gazing on the scene with evident impatience, but without the smallest endeavour to render assistance.

At the sight of the coucou he arose languidly, and, while his companion settled the account, to the evident satisfaction of the hackney-coachman, he scrambled into the vehicle, ensconced himself in the corner best shaded by the striped curtains, and laid his head backwards, as if wearied out with the fatigue and exertion he had undergone. The military-looking man, carrying a long green-baize bag under his arm, stood for a moment upon the iron step, plunging his head into the interior. Then exclaiming that the smell of the new paint, the varnish, and the leather rendered it insupportable, he demanded of me, somewhat peremptorily I thought, if I would give up my place for an inside corner. To this I assented at once, for the sun was beginning to dart with a terrible glare upon the polished leather of the harness, and my eyes were blinded by the flashing of the new brass ornaments. So I cheerfully leaped down from my seat upon the swing-board. The stranger thanked me grimly, climbed to my place, laid the long bag of green-baize across his knees with the greatest care, pulled up the corners of his moustache, and set his hat over his brow to shade his eyes from the sun; while I jumped lightly into the vehicle, little dreaming that this simple action had

determined my future destiny, and that for me Accident had ceased and Fatality had begun!

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER III. THE CIPHER TELEGRAM.

SIR GEOFFREY was walking in the grounds at Wheatcroft when a fly with Madge and her luggage drove up to the little lodge gates. The old general looked up, and recognising the visitor, walked to the door of the vehicle and courteously assisted her to alight.

"If you are not tired, Mrs. Pickering," said he, "you may as well let the man go on with your luggage to the house, while we stroll up there quietly together; it is a beautiful evening, and there are one or two things which I have to say to you."

He spoke to her with doffed hat, and holding her hand in his, treating her as he always treated her, as a lady and his equal in rank.

Looking at him with the evening sunlight falling full upon his face, Madge was much struck with the alteration in Sir Geoffrey's appearance. His cheeks, never very full, were now quite hollow; his lips seemed more tightly set and more rigid even than usual, and there was a strange, strained, seered look round his eyes.

"I shall be delighted to walk with you," said Madge, "for I am cramped with long railway travelling. Has anything happened, Sir Geoffrey, during my absence?" she asked, suddenly.

"What could have happened?" he replied, turning to her abruptly. "What makes you inquire?"

"Something in your appearance," she said; "a look of care and anxiety, mingled with a certain amount of rebellious opposition, which I have never before perceived in you. You are not annoyed at my frankness, I hope?"

"On the contrary, I am gratified at the interest you are good enough to take in me; and more than ever impressed with the quickness of your perception."

"Then something has happened?"

"Exactly, something sufficiently disagreeable. I will tell you about it when you have had some refreshment; you must be faint after your long journey."

"I would very much sooner hear it now. I had some luncheon at Salisbury; besides,

being kept in suspense as to the cause of your annoyance, would quite deprive me of any appetite."

"Well, then, I will tell you, and do my best to make my story as short as possible. You have never asked me any particulars of my early history, Mrs. Pickering, nor have I volunteered them to you; but you know that I have a son—I say you know it, because on two or three occasions when I have expressed myself as to the ingratitude of children, I have seen your eyes fixed upon me with that quiet, searching gaze which is peculiar to yourself, and which showed me you guessed I was not speaking on a subject of which I had not had experience. I have a son——"

"Gerald! I—I mean George."

"I beg your pardon," exclaimed the old gentleman, with surprise, "your information is more complete than I imagined. You seem to know my son's name?"

"From seeing it subscribed to a few boyish letters, and one or two water-colour sketches, which were amongst the papers you bade me empty from the bullock-trunk and destroy," said Madge.

"Quite right, I recollect them," said the general. "Yes, I have one son, George Heriot. His mother died when he was a lad. Ten years before her death I separated from her, believing her to have been guilty of an intrigue with a man whom I shot; the boy lived with her during her lifetime, but on my return to England I intended to make him my companion and my heir, when by the commission of what I consider one of the worst of all crimes, an act of cowardice, he forfeited all claim upon my affection. I forbade him my house, telling him at the same time—not maliciously, but as an incidental portion of our quarrel with which I need not trouble you—the story of his mother's disgrace. The lad declared I had been befooled by my own jealousy and temper, and swore that he would never rest until he had convinced me of my error, and cleared his mother's name."

"That was good and brave!" said Madge. "A lad who could undertake such a championship and in such a spirit could be no coward."

"You think so," said Sir Geoffry, looking sharply at her.

"I am sure of it!" said Madge. "Ask yourself, Sir Geoffry; what does your own heart tell you?"

"My heart tells me what it told me at the time I discovered my wife's intrigue; that thoroughly well informed as I was of her guilt, I acted rightly in separating

myself from her and killing her seducer. When George Heriot raved before me my heart told me that his conduct was mere boyish bravado and unfilial insolence. When he came here yesterday——"

"Did he come here yesterday? Was Gerald—George here yesterday?"

"He was; and when he stood there boasting that he had succeeded in what he had undertaken, and that he had proofs of his mother's innocence, my heart told me that it was a lie; and that he had returned with some trumped-up tale to endeavour to reinstate himself in my favour."

The general was very hot and very much flushed when he came to a conclusion. He looked towards his companion, as though expecting her to speak; but finding she did not do so, he said, after a pause:

"You are silent, Mrs. Pickering!"

"Do you wish me to speak, Sir Geoffry?"

He paused again, and, apparently after some slight internal struggle, he said:

"I do, though if I guess rightly, what you have to say will not be quite consonant with my feelings, not quite agreeable for me to hear. Nevertheless, say what you have to say, and I will listen to you: there is no other person in the world from whom I could take as much."

This last sentence was only half heard by Madge. She was revolving in her mind whether she should confess to Sir Geoffry her acquaintance with Gerald, and the important part which she had played in the drama of the boy's life. Her first idea was to confess all; but when she recollected the old general's infirmity of temper, she thought that such an admission would lead him to look upon her in the light of a partisan, and thus irretrievably weaken her advocacy.

"I had no right to speak until requested by you to do so," she said; "and as you have rightly divined that I do not hold with your views in the matter, I would willingly have held my peace. Bidden to speak, I tell you frankly, Sir Geoffry, that I think you have been wrong from first to last. Of course the whole affair, the separation from your wife, the disinheritance of your son, all hangs upon the one question of whether Mrs. Heriot were innocent or guilty. You say that you convinced yourself before the fulfilment of your revenge, but your son declares that he has obtained proofs of his mother's innocence.* You are hasty, Sir Geoffry, apt to jump at conclusions without due deliberation, impatient of contradiction, and from what I know of your son, or rather I mean of course from

what I have heard, and from what I gather from your account of him, he would not, I imagine, be likely to come forward without ample grounds for his assertion."

The general had been pacing slowly by Madge's side during this colloquy, his hands clasped behind him, his head bent thoughtfully forward. As she progressed his face grew dark and stern, and when she paused he said:

"He would come forward for the sake of getting into my good graces and reinstating himself in his position in this house."

"If he had that object in view, would he not have served his purpose better by pretending that he had discovered the truth of your story, pleading his mistake, and throwing himself on your mercy?"

"He is starved out and forced to capitulate; he is at the end of his resources, and so comes with the best story he can to make terms."

"The length of time that has elapsed between his enforced departure from his home and his attempted return to it, impresses me decidedly in his favour," said Madge. "During the greater portion of this time he has doubtless been occupied in making the research which he says has terminated so favourably, and as for his having come to the end of his resources, I ask you, Sir Geoffry, whether it is likely that a young man who has maintained himself, whether honestly or dishonestly, well or ill, we know not, but still who has maintained himself for such a length of time, is likely to be at his wit's end in the very flower of his youth?"

"You think then I ought to have listened to him?"

"Unquestionably, for your own sake. If he had produced the proofs which he stated himself to possess, the remorse which you must have felt would have been tempered by the thought that you had acted in good faith, and by the recovery and reinstatement of your discarded son. If he had not those proofs, or they were insufficient to convince you, you would have had the satisfaction of knowing that you had been right throughout. At present——"

"At present I have only lost my temper, and made a fool of myself. That is, I suppose, what you would say," said the general, looking up rather ruefully at his companion. "So I did, raised the whole house, and told Riley to put the boy out. But what on earth did you go away for, Mrs. Pickering? If you had been at home this would not have happened."

"It will not be difficult to remedy it yet,

Sir Geoffry," said Madge, with a quiet smile. "You must write to him, and tell him to come here."

"Write to him!" cried the general. "I have not the least notion where he lives."

"I dare say we can manage to find out," said Madge.

"It is my belief you could manage to do anything you wished," said the general. "However, we will talk this matter over further; and there is another subject of great importance which I want to discuss with you later on. Now let us go into dinner."

The tone of his voice showed that his heart was softened, and Madge was inexpressibly gratified at the idea that she, of whom Gerald had once been so fond, and who, as he thought, had treated him so badly, might become the means of his reinstatement in his father's house, and in his proper position in society.

The subject was not alluded to by either Sir Geoffry or Madge during the rest of that evening. The short conversation with his housekeeper during their walk in the grounds had afforded the old general sufficient matter for reflection, and he sat buried in thought, dispensing with the reading of the newspaper, which he had missed so much during Madge's absence, and which he had intended to resume on her return. Madge herself was thoroughly tired out, and at a very early hour the little household was at rest.

The next morning brought Mr. Drage, who came up brimming over with news of the church congress, and intending to demolish Sir Geoffry in certain theological questions over which they were at issue, by cunningly devised arguments which had been used in the course of the clerical debate. But finding Mrs. Pickering had returned, and that the general was engaged out of doors, Mr. Drage availed himself of the opportunity to make his way to the housekeeper's room. There he found Madge, and after a few warm greetings on both sides, received from her a full account of her memorable visit to Sandown.

Mr. Drage listened with the deepest interest. Impressed as she was with the gravity of the crime about to be committed, and its probable consequences to herself and the wretched woman who was about to become a participator in it, Madge could scarcely avoid being amused, as she watched the various changes which played over Mr. Drage's face during the recital of the story. That such a crime as bigamy had been contemplated was horrifying to the simple country clergyman, whose ex-

perience of law breaking was derived from occasional attendance at the magistrates' meetings, where poaching and affiliation cases were the only troubles to the bench. But that a woman could be found who not merely did not shrink from the man who had endeavoured to entrap her into an illegal alliance, but actually announced her intention of fulfilling the contract and defying the world, was entirely beyond Mr. Drage's comprehension.

"And now you have heard all, and are in full possession of each circumstance of the case as it now stands, what do you recommend should be done?" asked Madge.

"I confess," said the rector, with a very blank and perplexed look, "that I am quite unable to advise you. I have never come across so determined a character as Mr. Vane appears to be; and this woman seems, from what you say, to be a perfect match for him. It is, of course, most horrible to have to sit by and witness an open infraction of the law, but we have at least the satisfaction of knowing that we have done our best to prevent it, even though the warning was not attended to."

"As you say, we have done our best, and there it must end. I am heartily sick of the trouble and vexation it has caused me. If there had remained in me one lingering spark of affection for my husband, it would have been extinguished by this last and greatest insult. My pride tells me that I have already proceeded too far in this matter, and that when he hears what I have done, as he will hear, sooner or later, he will ascribe my actions to my continued attachment to him, and my unwillingness to see him taken by another woman."

"Your pride may teach you that, but I have been reflecting as you spoke," said Mr. Drage, "and my conscience teaches me that we should not suffer this sin to be committed without one further attempt to prevent it. You have seen Mrs. Bendixen, and she has refused to listen to you. I will go to London and search for Mr. Vane; he is a man of the world, and will more readily comprehend the difficulties which beset him, and the danger in which they are liable to result."

"He is a desperate man," said Madge, "and one who would flinch from nothing where his interests were involved or his safety at stake. I should dread any meeting between you."

"I am grateful for your interest in me," said the rector, with the hectic flush rising in his cheek, "but I do not fear much for myself; and even were he to kill me——"

"I will not have you talk in that manner," said Madge, laying her hand lightly on his arm, and looking up earnestly into his face.

The Reverend Onesiphorus Drage had for some months past told himself that he had conquered his wild absorbing love for Mrs. Pickering, and that he only regarded her as a sister. There are so many of us who on certain subjects are frank and loyal to all others, and eminently deceitful to ourselves. When the rector left Mrs. Pickering's presence, he made his way to Sir Geoffrey, whom he found still engaged in colloquy with the gardener. The old general was very pleased to see his clerical friend, shook him warmly by the hand, and promptly declined to enter into any of the church-congress questions or arguments which Mr. Drage had eagerly submitted to him, alleging that he had business of more pressing importance, on which the rector's advice was required.

Up and down the carriage sweep in front of the house walked the two gentlemen for more than an hour; the subject of their conversation being the same as that which had occupied the general and Mrs. Pickering on the previous evening. Even at greater length than he had spoken to his housekeeper, Sir Geoffrey explained to his friend the story of his earlier life, the separation from his wife, the duel with Mr. Yeldham, the interview with Gerald when he bade the boy renounce his name and his position, and the recent interview when he ordered Riley to turn him from the door. If he had any doubt of the feelings with which this narrative would have been received, the behaviour of his companion would have soon settled his mind. Mr. Drage listened silently to all from the commencement of the story until the end. He never made the slightest verbal interruption; but as Sir Geoffrey proceeded, the rector's head sunk upon his breast, and his hands, which had been clasped behind him, at last formed a refuge wherein his agitated face was hidden.

When the story came to an end, there was a long pause, broken by Sir Geoffrey's saying:

"There is not much need to ask your opinion of my conduct in this matter, I see plainly that you are of the same mind as Mrs. Pickering, and consider that I have acted wrongly."

"I do," said Mr. Drage, raising his head, "most wrongly, and unlike a parent, unlike a Christian, unlike a gentleman!"

"Sir!" cried the old general, stopping short in his walk, and glaring fiercely at his friend.

"I repeat what I said, Sir Geoffrey Heriot, and defy you to disprove my words. Was it like a gentleman to watch and spy upon the actions of your wife and her partner in the ball-room; was it like a Christian to shoot down this man upon the mere supposition of his guilt?"

"Shoot him down, sir?—he had his chance," cried the general.

"His chance!" echoed the rector, severely. "What chance had a dilettante poet, painter, musician, what not, a loungeur in drawing-rooms and boudoirs, who probably never had a pistol in his hands in his life? What chance had he against you, a trained man of arms? Was it like a father for you to condemn this lad for keeping the oath which he had sworn to keep at his dying mother's bedside; to hunt him from your house when he came with his long-sought proofs of that mother's innocence?"

"You are a hard hitter, sir," said Sir Geoffrey, eyeing him sternly. "You don't spare your adversaries!"

"Not when I think that there is a chance of rousing in them a spirit of remorse, or prompting them to actions of atonement."

"Pardon me one moment," said Sir Geoffrey. "Before we talk of remorse and atonement, I should point out to you that I am not the only one to blame in this question. I am hot-tempered, I allow it. Nature and the life I have led settled that for me; but this boy is as hot tempered as I am, and has an insolent way with him, which is in the highest degree provoking. However, we have talked enough on my family matters for the present. Let us go in and see what Mrs. Pickering has provided for luncheon."

The rector knew his friend's peculiarities too well to attempt to renew the conversation at that time, and silently followed him into the house.

Before he went away the rector found an opportunity of telling Mrs. Pickering the subject of the conversation he had had with Sir Geoffrey, and spoke earnestly about its unsatisfactory termination.

Mr. Drage imagined from Sir Geoffrey's tone, and from the abrupt manner in which he had brought the discussion to a close, that he was still highly incensed against his son; but Madge was much more sanguine on being able to bring Gerald back to his proper place in his father's heart. She knew that, however harsh and curt the general's manner might be to Mr. Drage, or to any other of his friends, she had a mollifying power over him, which, duly exercised, never failed to soothe him

in his most irrational moments. She did not say this to the rector, with whom she simply consoled, but she felt tolerably certain that the day would not pass over without the subject being again broached to her by the general.

She was wrong. In the afternoon she received a summons to the library, and found Sir Geoffrey awaiting her.

"I will not trouble you to commence reading just now, Mrs. Pickering," said he, as he saw Madge opening the newspapers which had just arrived from London. "I want to talk to you upon a matter of some importance, not quite in your line perhaps, but one in which your strong common sense cannot fail to advise me well and usefully. You have heard me mention my friend Irving?"

"Mr. Irving, of Coombe Park?"

"The same; I have told you of my long friendship with him, and of his determination made long ago, and abided by ever since, to enter into no speculations which I do not approve of. Strange to think that a man of a City position and financial knowledge should choose to be governed in his investments by an old Indian officer, who knows little of money matters, and has never been on the Stock Exchange in his life! However, Irving is a Scotchman, and a great believer in luck; and as the first dabble on which I advised him turned out a lucky hit, he has relied upon me ever since, and has not done badly on the whole."

"Surely that is a mild way of putting it," said Madge. "I think I have heard you say that Mr. Irving is one of the richest men in England?"

"So he is; and that is so well known that the mere advertisement of his name is a mine of wealth to any affair with which he may happen to be connected, such confidence does it inspire. Rich as he is, though, he still likes making the money, still takes a pleasure in adding to his heap, *crescit amor nummi*—what was it we used to say at school? Irving has been speculating very little lately; indeed, I began to fancy that he had given it up altogether. But of late I have had several letters from him, each increasing in warmth and keenness about a certain mining company called the Terra del Fuegos, in which he is half persuaded to embark."

"The Terra del Fuegos?" repeated Madge.

"That is the name. Surely, Mrs. Pickering," said the old general, jocularly, "you are not a shareholder in that promising undertaking?"

"No," said she, "and yet the name

seems to be familiar to me. Where can I have heard it?"

"Most probably it has caught your eye when you have been kindly reading over to me the prices of stocks and shares, and, being an odd name, has remained on your memory. However, Irving, though more predisposed in favour of this concern than of anything else which I can remember for many years, has abided by his old practice of referring to me for his final decision. I have read through all the printed documents connected with the undertaking, which in themselves are eminently satisfactory; but I require a little further information on certain points, and wrote so to Irving. He referred my letter to the company, who must consider his cohesion to their undertaking of great importance, as they proposed to send down two of their body, the chairman and the general manager, to explain matters to me."

"The general manager!" cried Madge.

"And the chairman," said the general. "I forget their names, but I have them somewhere in the printed papers. These gentlemen will be down here to-morrow or the day after. Of course they will stay in the house, and I will ask you to be good enough to make preparations for their reception."

Madge took the first opportunity to escape from the library, and seek the solitude of her own room, while Sir Geoffry was prosing on the mention of the general manager, and gave her the clue to the train of thought which the name of Terra del Fuegos had started. Philip Vane was the general manager to the Terra del Fuegos. She recollected Mr. Drage having obtained that information from his father's clerk in the City. And he was coming there to Wheateroft! He must not see her there. She must find some pretext for absenting herself during his stay. Could this visit to Wheateroft have any connexion with the telegram which had summoned him from Sandown, and which, as she believed, was the original of that of which Rose had forwarded to her the copy? What connexion could there be between the two events she could not tell, but that there was a link between them she firmly believed.

She took the paper from the pocket of the dress which she had worn while travelling, and spread it out before her. She pored over it for an hour, puzzling her

brain in endeavouring to assort and re-adjust the jumbled mass of letters before her. It was of no use, she would give it up for the present, her head might be clearer another time perhaps. She opened her desk, intending to lock the paper away in it, when suddenly she started and uttered loud cry of joy. From the small leather note-case at the bottom of the desk, one of the few relics of Philip Vane which she possessed, she drew a long strip of paper, with a column of letters in consecutive order on either side inscribed in the following manner:

A—F
B—R
C—M
D—B

and so on. This column was headed "Writing." Under the other, headed "Reading," these letters were reversed.

"My memory serves me well," said Madge, with delight, "and I am repaid for having kept this note-case and its contents so long. This is a key to some cipher which Philip must evidently have used at one period of his life. Let us see whether it fits this message. If it does, I think the translation will not be difficult."

She turned the slip of paper with the "Reading" side uppermost, and by its aid commenced deciphering the telegram and arranging it into plain language. After some minutes' hard labour, she read the following as the result:

"You must come up at once. Irving is impracticable, and refuses to join until he sees his friend Sir G. H.'s signature to the deed. That signature must be procured at any price. Come up at once."

"That signature must be obtained at any price," repeated Madge. "I don't think it will be obtained. I am sure it will not if I am a match for Philip Vane!"

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER IV. LIFE AND DEATH.

SIR JOHN and Lady Archbold, who lived at Camlough in the hills, had an only daughter, about a year older than May. They loved this child better than their own souls and bodies, and as much as they hated the thought of death; which is saying a good deal. The fame of the beauty and spirit of this girl had travelled to Monasterlea, and many a time May had stood on tiptoe, looking over the hedges, to see her riding past by her father's side, with her yellow hair streaming on the wind.

The little girl at Camlough was one of May's dream-playmates. She had many such companions, who shared all her confidences, and joined in her games. Another was the grim stone angel of the passage, who was petted and talked to in the daylight, but rather shunned when the night began to come on. The girl from Camlough was May's especial friend. This little person was always supposed to be at hand, and her opinion was taken on all subjects. So fond was May of this little girl, that she would sit for hours upon the highest step of the belfry-stairs, gazing through a hole in the ruined wall across the land towards Camlough. There, behind the Golden Mountain, she was told there stood a castle of delights, of which her friend was a princess. Wonderful travelling carriages would appear upon the lonesome road, on their way to this palace of enchantment. May had once been at the inn at the foot of the mountain, where Sir John's huge oxen were kept in

waiting for his guests. She had seen the horses taken out and the oxen yoked to, and the fine ladies screaming a little, when the oxen began to pull and the carriages began moving up the fine paved road cut in the steep mountain's face. From her belfry she could trace the movement of the oxen on that distant road, could watch them to the very rim of the crown of the mountain, see them quiver there a moment against the sun, then drop out of her sight into unknown realms of bliss.

But the little girl at Camlough fell sick. The palace of delights was a saddened palace. The echo of the anguish of those parents who knew not how to suffer was heard over the moors and through the hills. The child was sick to death; rallied, fell back, wasted, and grew weaker, and at last was given over as incurable. Doctors took their way from Camlough. It was said that Lady Archbold quarrelled with the last who lingered, and would have waited a little longer; that she ordered him from the place because he would not tell her that her child should surely live. Then the frantic parents gave way to despair.

One hot dark night, Midsummer Eve, Katherine Archbold lay in a trance like death. Her father was sitting by her bed. Her mother walked about the room close by, mad with rebellious agony. The short darkness of the warm summer night hung heavily on this dwelling of luxury. The silver lamps burned softly, and the odour of flowers came through the open windows. The servants were afraid to sleep, knowing that at any moment death might arrive. And after that they knew not what to expect. For her ladyship was determined that the child should not die.

There was a poor fool sitting down in

the kitchen, muttering to himself as idiots do, and nobody was minding him. He was an idiot from birth, one of those who "live among the people." He wandered from place to place, and was welcome everywhere; for people say such as he bring luck.

This poor lad was sitting in the kitchen of the castle of Camlough while Katherine Archbold lay dying up-stairs. The cook had placed meat and beer before him, but the fool had heard rumours of the trouble that was in the place, and he would not eat as usual. Not that he cared much for the young lady herself, for she had often tormented him; not that he cared much for Lady Archbold, who seldom bestowed notice on such as he; but his simple heart was sore for Sir John. Sir John always threw him a shilling when he passed him, and sent him to the cook to get his dinner; and he nodded to him and smiled at him, and Con the idiot knew a smile from a frown.

Two or three servants were talking of the deadliness of the child's disease, of the uselessness of doctors, of the grief of the father and mother, and of fifty things besides. All at once Con started from his seat, and sped to the kitchen door.

"Hallo, my boy!" cried the cook, "you stay here for the night!"

But Con only flung a grin of delight over his shoulder, and disappeared; not out of doors, but, to the dismay of all present, up-stairs, where he had no business to be.

Sir John, sitting by the side of his daughter, with his face buried in his hands, felt a touch upon his shoulder, and looked up with a great start. There were Con's white face and black eyes gleaming at him in the dull light of the sick-room.

"Master!" said the idiot, caressingly.

Sir John was about to shake him off, but the great tenderness and sympathy in the lad's face caught his attention.

"Master, take miss down mountain!" said the fool in an excited whisper; and he pointed with his finger to the open window, beyond which the day was already breaking, leaving the dark peaks of the hills all naked against the pale rifts between the clouds.

"Father Felix, master! Father Felix, master!"

Sir John started again, and a flush rose to his face. He guessed on the instant at the meaning of the fool. Every one in the country knew that the sick were brought to Father Felix. Many and many a time Sir John had laughed at the folly. Yester-

day he would have laughed at it. But now, being in despair, he felt differently.

Within the next half-hour the whole castle was astir. All the people of the place knew that a strange thing was about to happen. Lady Archbold, docile for once, hurried on with quivering hands her most sumptuous riding-habit, and placed a hat with long feathers and jewelled buckle above her ghastly face. A litter was constructed and covered with a rich coverlet, and the insensible maiden was placed on it, supported by pillows and swathed in costly wrappings. A heap of June flowers lay on her feet. Servants in splendid liveries mounted the finest horses in the stables, and carried baskets of fruit and flowers, and vessels of silver and gold, upon their saddles. The antique jewel-hilted sword, or skein, which was the most precious heir-loom of the family, and the ancient banner with their arms, were carried conspicuously in front of the procession. Six stout retainers carried the litter on their shoulders, and the woful parents rode a little in advance on either side. A crowd of servants, labourers, tradespeople, and tenants, who poured out at short notice from the settlement of Camlough in the lap of the Golden Mountain, made a motley rear-guard to the train. Down the rugged passage of the steep mountain came winding slowly this mournful and vainglorious procession, with the glory of the midsummer morning flashing on the rich draperies of the litter, the pale adorned figure of the prostrate child, and the awed, wondering faces around her. And far on before them fled the swift-footed fool, the herald and vanguard of the train, with his arms extended as a signal of alarm, and all the fires of the sunrise burning in his eyes.

Early that morning little May had climbed the belfry to send the wishes of her heart to her sick dream-playmate. With two level hands above her eyebrows she had screamed aloud, so sharply that the crows started cawing out of the ivy.

"Aunt Martha," she cried, flying into the breakfast parlour, "there is a strange slow procession coming down the Golden Mountain."

"Guests returning," said Miss Martha, comfortably, speaking from behind the steam of her teapot.

"There are no visitors at Camlough this long, long time," said May, who was as pale as the white rose in the garden.

"That is true," said Miss Martha, doubtfully, "but what are you afraid of?"

"I fear that it may be the little girl's funeral," said May, and burst into a passion of tears.

"Impossible;" said Miss Martha; "we should have heard of her death."

"Do not cry, little one," said Father Felix. "It is no doubt an ordinary funeral from the hills." And he stole away to his chapel to pray for the rest of some unknown soul.

"Now you take the telescope, May," said her aunt, "and amuse yourself watching these travellers. And don't you fret yourself for nothing, my dear. As for me I have to boil my preserves."

Funerals were familiar events to Miss Martha.

"But there are bright things shining in the riders' hands, and a bier with a cover as white as snow," muttered May in her belfry, telescope in hand. And then about noon she beheld wild Con coming flying along the road to Monasterica.

"News, Con? News from Camlough?" cried May, speeding to meet him, and clapping her hands to attract his notice. But he dashed past her without heeding, leaped over the gravestones like a goat, dived into the cloisters through a breach in the wall, nor paused till he burst into the chapel.

The old priest had been kneeling in prayer before his altar, but rose in dismay at the rude noise. Wild Con dropped prostrate at his feet.

"Master bring miss down hill," cried the fool. "Father Felix make her laugh and walk about. Ah! little missy get up quite well."

Father Felix patted him soothingly on the head. The idiot was quivering with excitement. He began to laugh and cry as the sound of many feet and voices became audible through the window. But the priest signed to him to be still and reverent, and he crouched upon the ground, covering his face with his hands.

The door opened again, and May came radiantly into the chapel, stepping on tip-toe, and looking like a spirit.

"Uncle," she whispered, clasping his hands, "Sir John and Lady Archbold have come all the way from Camlough with their daughter, who is sick. You will cure her, uncle? Oh, you will make her well."

The old man changed colour and trembled. "My child," he said, "you know not what you say. But I will go and learn what they ask of me."

The procession had poured itself into the graveyard. The litter had been placed upon

a fallen tombstone. The white velvet trappings swept the earth, and the flowers and baubles glowed and glittered with new lustre and colour in the brilliant air. A tawny-cheeked woman in a scarlet shawl held a canopy of white silk over the sick girl's wan face, and over the loose golden hair, which lay in a shower among the nettles. Sir John had alighted, and, with hat in hand, advanced to meet the monk. Lady Archbold sat haughtily on her horse.

"Good sir," said Sir John, "our daughter is sick. All natural aid has failed to cure her. We come to you, begging you will restore her. We have brought you gifts—the most precious things we could select on the instant—but they are a small part of what we are prepared to give you."

The old man glanced all around, for the pomp and pride of the scene troubled him. As he stood there, with the eyes of these great people upon him, he looked to worldly view a meagre figure, both as to flesh and garb, yet with a certain dignity of age and holiness which could not be questioned, still less understood. Sir John grew impatient at a moment's delay.

"Sir," he said, "we are in anguish. Is it not your calling to succour the distressed?"

"Alas, sir," said the old man, "take away your gifts. God alone can do what you desire. I can pray in your name, but He looks to the humility of your heart."

Lady Archbold now pressed forward.

"Sirrah, obey!" she cried, wildly. "You shall exert your power—we care not much if it be of heaven or of hell. We only want our child! Oh, me, we only want our child!" And she broke out into a wail of despair.

"Lady," said the old man, looking at her with mild pity, "you speak to me as if I were a sorcerer. I am no such thing, neither am I a saint—only the poorest of God's servants. And I hesitate, fearing no mercy will be shown which is demanded in such a spirit."

Lady Archbold's face sank beneath his glance. She flung herself from her horse, and went down on her knees till the feathers of her hat touched the earth.

"Oh," she moaned, "tell me how to feel that this be done. You shall put ashes on my head, and I will be the humblest poor woman in these mountains. I have lived without religion, but I will try to be a Christian henceforward. Only ask your God to give me back my child!"

Many women began to sob around to see the proud lady humbled thus. The old

priest himself had tears in his eyes as he answered her appeal.

"Daughter," he said, "I will do as you wish. Let us all, then, kneel, and crave this blessing."

All sank upon their knees in the grass. Some supported themselves against the broken crosses, some leaned upon the mounds of the graves. Many women were weeping, many men trembling. Lady Archbold crouched with her face to the very moss of the earth. It was long, whispered the people, since she had knelt before. She shuddered as the priest made a loud distinct prayer, to which the mass of the people responded with a sound that was like the roaring of a troubled sea.

But soon there was silence in the graveyard. The priest had sunk prostrate in silent prayer. The very rooks had stopped their clamour in the belfry. The people held their breath, and feared even to sway their bent bodies. Only a lark dared to sing, and sang long and ecstatically, rising higher and higher, till, only for the echo of its notes, it might have seemed to be consumed in the amber fires of the sun. It seemed to May that the singing of this lark was the voice of the old man's prayer, as it pierced its urgent way to heaven.

An hour passed, and the kneeling people began to grow weary. Lady Archbold glanced once at her child, crouched to the earth again, and groaned aloud. Another hour passed, and a woman fainted, and some children stole away to play at a distance. It was far in the third hour when a loud scream rang out upon the air.

The scream came from May, who was close to the sick girl, and had seen her long hair stir among the nettles. The next moment Katherine Archbold sat up, and began gazing curiously around her. First a hoarse murmur of awe ran through the crowd; then there arose such a cheer from the hearts of the mountain men as had never been heard among these walls before. The startled crows set up a wild clamour round the belfry. The mother rushed towards her daughter, stumbled among the people and fell, but was raised by the strong, kind arms of women, and carried by them to the side of her Katherine. Mother, father, and child were locked in a wild embrace, amidst the sobs and exclamations of the people.

It was some minutes before any one remembered the old priest. Little May's shrill voice again raised, and her slight arm beating back the people, first recalled him to their minds. Then they looked on the ground where he lay upon his face. They

turned him on his back, and found he had passed from prayer into a swoon. Now Miss Martha bustled up in tears. She had knelt in the distance upon her door-step, half joining in the scene and half resenting it, knowing too well the consequences of such efforts for her brother. She gathered his frail body in her arms, and, with the help of friends, had him carried to the house.

"Ah, yes, good sir," she said, bitterly, to Sir John, "he has given your daughter health, but I greatly fear she has given him his death."

"I pray God no," said Sir John.

Miss Martha was too hospitable to suffer the people from Camlough to return without refreshment, and bestowed on them such entertainment as it was in her power to give. The crowd soon scattered to carry far and wide the story of the morning, and Sir John and his wife and child honoured Miss Martha's dwelling with their presence.

May invited Katherine to her own little room, having leave to wait upon her, whilst Miss Martha was attending to Lady Archbold. To this Katherine submitted with a languid condescension.

"Have you not a better frock than this?" asks she, surveying the robe of thick white muslin in which May was attiring her with tender hands.

"Alas, no!" said May, crest-fallen, "I always thought it was a pretty frock, but I see it is not good enough for you."

"I should think not," said Katherine, flinging her head about, and tossing her gold mane in May's eyes. "You should see what handsome frocks I wear at Camlough; but what makes your eyes so red, little girl?"

"I wept this morning," said May, who was ready to weep again. "I wept because you were so sick."

"How funny!" said Katherine, laughing; "I'm sure I should not weep if you were sick. But I like you very well, and you shall come to Camlough. You are a nice little girl in your own way; but you are not so beautiful as I am."

"Oh, no!" said May, eagerly, "I could not be so silly as to think so."

"You are a *very* pleasant little girl," said Katherine; "I shall certainly have you with me at Camlough."

Before Sir John and Lady Archbold left Monasterlea, they stood by the old priest's bedside, to offer him their thanks. At her husband's suggestion, Lady Archbold expressed her sorrow for wild words which had been uttered in her grief.

The old man was ill, and could not speak much. "Forget all that," he said, "but there is one thing I would bid you remember. Guard well this soul that God has given back into your keeping. See that in gaining her, you have not lost her. Make her modest and holy, gentle and wise."

But Lady Archbold's pride was on the return. She thought herself lectured, and turned away with impatience, which she hardly took the trouble to conceal. At the same moment Katherine was led unwillingly into the room, glancing about the place with an air of scorn. The pallid old man upon the couch was an object of ridicule in her eyes. When her father placed her beneath the hand which was extended to bless her, she drew back in disgust. And then they all departed, and the train went back to Camlough.

And May hid herself in her belfry to weep. This was her first real grief. Katherine had disappointed her. The sweet dream-playmate was no more. Pride shown to herself she did not mind, but contempt of her uncle the loving heart could not brook.

And after all this Miss Martha's anxious words came true; for in two days Father Felix was dead.

CHAPTER V. THE HEIR TO THE WOODS.

PAUL FINISTON and his mother had for many years lived in a high narrow house, on the Quays, in Dublin, close by where a light bridge springs over the dark running river. Tall spars congregated beside it, and old brown sails flapped heavily in the water, turning orange and red in the sun. High above there were domes against the sky, and in the shadow of the up-hill distance loomed the ghostly outlines of many peaks and pinnacles.

Mrs. Finiston was a frail creature, who was chained to a sofa in her dingy room. For years she had had nothing strong to protect her but her trust in God, nothing bright to look at but the face of her boy. Yet with these two comforts she had managed to get on pretty well, and now her son was turning into a tall brave lad. Only let her live for a few years more and she might free him for ever from the dangers that beset him.

She had saved her husband from the curse of his family, and she would also try to save her son. Her husband had been the brother of Simon the miser. He had obtained with difficulty a commission in the army, and had been sent into the world to seek his fortune. It had been her labour

to keep him from longing after ill-omened possessions. She was tender, upright, and somewhat superstitious, and the curse of Tobereevil had been the terror of her life. The dread of it had made her patient in poverty, and peculiarly unselfish in her love; and her patience and love had so influenced her husband that he had never shown a desire to touch the rusting treasures of his race. Husband and wife had paid one visit together to Tobereevil, and had hastened away, shuddering at the wretchedness they had witnessed. But now he had been dead many years.

Mrs. Finiston was in receipt of a small pension, and possessed also a trifling annuity of her own. But all this little income would vanish when she died. No wonder, then, that she prayed to be spared. No wonder that she stinted and saved with the hope of being enabled to give her son a profession. She had determined against making him a soldier. As a soldier he would be always poor; and in poverty, there was that danger of the longing for the riches of the misers of Tobereevil. She would hedge round his future from that risk.

Her high sitting-room window was bowed out towards the river, and the narrow panes between its ancient pilasters afforded a view over the bridge into the sunshine. The dome of the Four Courts shone finely in the distance above the masts, through the soft amber haze of a summer's day. She had resolved that under its shelter her Paul should yet win fame and gold: honourable fame, which he would prefer to wealth, gold, honestly earned, which he would generously share and spend. There were many great men even in her own little day who had grown up out of smaller beginnings. The mother on the sofa recalled a dozen such.

With a view to all this she had deprived herself of comfort that he might be taught by the best tutors in Dublin. He was now seventeen, a student of Trinity, and had taken a fair share of honours for his time. He was not a genius, nor over-fond of books, but he loved his mother, and appreciated the sacrifices she was making for his sake. And, though he smiled a little at her anxiety about the curse, his horror of it was even greater than her own.

Thus Paul Finiston, sitting among his books in the rude old window, would often also raise his eyes and hopes to that dome of promise against the clouds. He would stifle in his heart certain yearnings for an open-air life; for travel, for change, for the ownership of country acres, and the

power of mastership in a dominion of his own. He would determine within him to let no weakness of purpose throw him in the way of temptation. He would become a learned hard-headed man of business, who should found a new house to redeem the honour of his name; and above all should have no leisure for bad dreams.

"Paul," said his mother one evening as he came in and settled down to his books, "I have had a letter from the west."

"From the west!" echoed Paul, startled, thinking of the miser.

"From dear old Martha Mourne. She is coming to Dublin on business with her lawyer. And she says, 'I will bring poor Timothy's child to see you.'"

"Who is poor Timothy's child?" asked Paul. "Her niece? I hope she is not grown up." For he was very shy of women, having been accustomed to speak to none but his mother.

"She is a child of about twelve years old, if I remember. And you must be kind to her, Paul. You must meet them at the coach and bring them here."

Paul pulled a face over his book, a sign of dismay which he would not have shown his mother for the world. He tried to be glad that she should see a friend, but for himself he had a dread of old women and children. Still he would be kind to them and civil to them, if he could. He would meet them at the coach-office, of course, and carry all their hand-boxes, if need be. He would pour out the tea as he was accustomed to do, and help little missy and old madam to cake. But after all these things were resolved upon, it could surely never hurt any one that he should kick his old boots about his own little room, and wish the good people safely back where they came from.

At four o'clock next day the coach came in. It was a long, rose-coloured evening towards the spring, full of soft promise of sweet months yet to come; bars of red fell across the bridge, and spikes of burnished gold tipped the clustering spars, while masses of light and shade rolled up and down the shifting shrouds, gambolling like living things.

Paul had laid the cloth, and brought the fat roast chicken and the slices of cold ham from the nearest cook's shop; had set forth the fresh lemon-cakes and the strawberry preserves. The tea was in the ~~mapot~~ and the kettle on the hob. He had placed the muffins at a prudent distance from the fire, where his mother on her sofa could turn them at her leisure; and, all these formid-

able arrangements made, he sauntered slowly down the quay with his hands in his pockets. He gazed with new interest at the movements of the men in the boats. He spoke to them from the wall, and was pleased when they invited him on board; but the very last moment of lingering arrived, and Paul was at his post when the coach drove up.

He scanned the faces inside, and recognised his charge with a thrill of relief. They did not appear awful after all, and they looked very tired, and very glad of him at the door. This no doubt made Paul look also glad to see them, and the introduction was quite pleasant and friendly. There was nothing to object to about Miss Martha, except that her bonnet was a little bruised on one side; but that was from falling asleep against the side of the coach. She looked thoroughly a lady in her neat garments of lavender and black, and her quick-witted ways seemed to announce that she was accustomed to be no inconvenience to any one. Beside her sat a slim little maiden, in a grey pelisse and a deep straw bonnet tied down with white, who was cherishing fondly a basket of roses, which had faded, in her lap. And, when the bonnet turned round, there were discovered under it cheeks flushed with fatigue, and bright eager eyes; a sweet little bloomy carnation of a face.

The travellers, upon their part, saw a strong, graceful, good-looking lad. The face was as good a face as ever woman looked upon. The features were manly, the eyes dark and steady under finely marked brows. They were sweet-tempered eyes, yet suggestive of passion. The forehead was broad; and the temples too full for any man, but a poet. The half-curved locks were thick and fair, and the mouth looked particularly truthful. It was not a very firm mouth, and yet not weak. Truthful-looking and changeable, and very apt to smile. And it smiled broadly as Paul Finiston handed young missy and old madam out of the coach.

As for parcels, Miss Martha had only two small bags and a large umbrella, and it was as much as Paul could do to get leave to carry the latter.

"No, my dear," she said, "though I like you for offering. It is a good sign to see a lad polite to old women. But I'd rather you'd take hands with little May to keep her steady on the crossings."

So Paul marched forward with May under one arm and the umbrella under the other, and Miss Martha followed with a

bag in each hand. And, in spite of his dread of old women and children, Paul forgot to be uneasy lest any of the Trinity fellows should happen to stroll down the street at the wrong minute, and behold this procession crossing the bridge.

THE WHITE WITCH OF COMBE ANDREW.

"I'll just go and see my Aunt Hagley : see if I don't!"

It was Mary Bernal who spoke, and it was Jane Dalby to whom she spoke; and what she said she said with an air, as if more was lying behind than the mere words would show.

Jane Dalby tossed her head. "Go, and welcome!" she answered disdainfully. "For my part," she continued, "I wouldn't own as glib as you to an aunt like that old Hagley. She's none such a dear to be so proud of!"

"All very well, Jane, for you to cast stones at aunt," said Mary with a superior manner. "Me and them as knows——" Here she stopped.

"Now then, go on, can't you?" cried Jane. "Out with it. You and them as knows what?"

"Well! we knows what we knows," said Mary, after a pause. "And now you're answered, Jane."

With which she left the servants' hall triumphantly, as one who has at least given the enemy a check, if nothing worse; going up-stairs to adorn her young mistress, Belle Loder; for it was dressing time; while Jane went to do the like office for her young lady, Rose Kenealy; both maids having the same object at heart for each—the fascination of Major Julius Crewkherne, owner of Crewkherne Manor hard by, and the handsomest man in Devonshire, as he was one of the best matches.

Now Crewkherne Manor and the Loder property lay handy to each other; and it had always been one of the favourite wishes of both houses, that the Crewkherne boy and the Loder girl would take a fancy to each other when they grew up, and so enclose the two estates in a ring fence that would suit every one concerned. Each property alone was well enough; but, both together, they would place the possessor among the best of the county, and would raise the joint families of Loder-Crewkherne to a position second to none in England. Wherefore it was, that when old Darcy Crewkherne died and his son the major came

home from India to reign in his stead, every one said it was a thing so plainly marked out by Providence—and the local map—that the major couldn't but see it, and do as his father had wished him to do; namely, take Miss Belle, and in time the Loder property, so soon as the days of mourning were at an end.

And perhaps things would have gone their way if the Loders could have managed to keep the major close, and not have let any one else have a chance. For he was fairly enough inclined to Miss Belle, when he first returned, and showed his liking frankly. But in an evil hour for her he accepted an invitation to stay a few days at Martin's Tor, the Rawdons' place; and there he found Rose Kenealy, Mrs. Rawdon's orphaned, penniless niece, whom they had adopted and brought up, and who was "out" for her first year.

To be sure the Rawdons, mindful of the common talk, had been careful to ask Belle Loder at the same time as the major; while, to do them justice, no thought of little Rose, or her possible attractions, had entered into their calculations. She was but a child yet to them; and they did not think of her marrying, any more than if she had been but ten years old instead of eighteen. They had known well and liked heartily old Darcy Crewkherne, and they had liked Julius too, when a boy; and they wished to be neighbourly, that was all. And as Julius was anxious to both make new and re-establish old relations, he had gone to Martin's Tor willingly; and when he had seen little Rose he had remained more willingly. It was a case of love at first sight; and the major was a man of a clear mind and determined will.

There could not be a more striking contrast between two girls than there was between Belle Loder and Rose Kenealy; and the contrast was not only on the outside. Belle was a tall, largely made, sleepy-looking girl with a dead white skin, a profusion of straight and silky flaxen hair, and heavy-lidded eyes of light hazel, with singularly large pupils. But you did not often see her eyes, for she had a trick of keeping them half closed; and only when she wished to produce an effect did she open them fully. Rose, on the contrary, was a small, slight, vivacious creature, with a curly head of brightest brown, rose-red cheeks, and large dark eyes that changed with the light, being sometimes blue and sometimes grey, but always bright and frank, and tender or merry as the humour took her. They were true Irish eyes, in-

herited from her father, and were as eloquent as other people's words. And the first sight of them bewitched Julius Crewkherne.

That was the very phrase they had used in the kitchen, when discussing the bearing of the major towards the two young ladies. Miss Belle, she was the one as ought to be, but Miss Rose, she had bewitched him. And the word was not used without meaning; for the Devonshire folk believe in witches to this day; witches both white and black; witches who cast a spell and witches who take it off again; witches that do harm and they that do good. Wherein was the sting of Mary Bernal's words, which Jane Dalby had understood well enough; for Aunt Hagley, down at Combe Andrew, was a white witch of power, and renowned as such through all the country side.

Long before the dinner-bell rang and the rest of the guests had assembled, Major Julius Crewkherne lounged into the drawing-room; and almost immediately after came Rose Kenealy.

As Rose came in, fresh and simple as usual, her dark-brown curly hair caught back by a broad blue ribbon, and her white dress looped here and there with blue, her small waist trimly belted, yet leaving her free and elastic, the major thought her the loveliest little rosebud of a girl he had ever seen; and with a nature as sweet and pure as her face. That frank look of hers was enough for him. Rose blushed to the very roots of her hair when she saw who was standing there in the bay window alone; but she looked only prettier for blushing; and as she did not attempt to run away, the major liked her all the better for her girlish embarrassment.

He came out from the bay of the window, and met her midway. It was a rare chance to see her alone; and he had made up his mind to profit by the first that offered.

"What pretty flowers!" he said, pointing to the flowers in her waistband. They were only a few sprays of jessamine, but he spoke as if they were something quite rare.

"I am so fond of jessamine," said Rose, simply.

"So am I," returned the major. "Will you give me one for my coat?"

"If you like," said Rose.

"And fasten it in for me?"

This was coming to rather close quarters; and Rose was not used to gentlemen's coats. Hesitating then a little, and blushing a

good deal, only complying because to refuse would be even more awkward, the girl, hanging down her head and trembling all over, came quite close to the major, and taking a spray from her waist, tried to fasten it into his coat. But her fingers were marvellously slow and heavy, and she bungled over her simple task in an unaccountable way. She felt as if she were going to faint, to die, to laugh aloud, or burst into tears; she did not indeed know how or what she felt; and it did not help her when the major, suddenly taking that little quivering hand in his, kissed it tenderly, saying in a soft whisper as he held it up to his cheek:

"May I ask your uncle to give me this, Rose? Will you give it me yourself?"

The girl made no answer. She only drooped her pretty head still lower, while her blushes faded into absolute paleness, and her slight figure trembled more.

"Do you love me, Rose?" the major went on to say. "Do you love me well enough to like to stay with me for ever, and marry me, and be my little wife? Will you not speak to me, my darling?"

"Yes, I do love you," said Rose, in a low voice.

And then the major took her in his arms, and lifted her fairly off her feet, as he kissed her silently, his heart, as hers, too full for words. And when he set her down again she fled, frightened, happy, confused, in such trouble of joy as to be almost pain, till she found herself in faithful Jane's sympathetic arms.

This day at dinner no one knew what ailed Rose that she looked so shy, and yet so happy; or what had come into her face to render her so beautiful. Only the major knew, and only Miss Loder guessed.

So now the thing was done; and Major Julius Crewkherne, the great match of the country, had committed himself to Miss Rose Kenealy, a girl without a penny, just a pretty little maid with bright eyes, rose-red cheeks, a frank smile, and a true heart. While here was his naturally appointed bride, Miss Belle, who had everything in her favour, shunted to the side, passed over, as we might say jilted.

When Belle Loder heard the news, not the keenest observer could have said that she suffered, or indeed have told that she felt at all. It was Mrs. Rawdon herself who told her, quite apologetically, and with many-repeated assurances that she had been as much taken by surprise as any one could be. She had never thought of such a thing! Rose, of all persons in

the world, little more than a mere child yet, only just out of the nursery!

On which Miss Loder, who until now had been sitting, as if carved in alabaster, counting her fan-sticks, suddenly lifted up her eyes and looked Mrs. Rawdon full in the face. And her look was so sudden, so fierce, so direct, her eyes were so large, the pupils so dilated, the look so fixed, that poor Mrs. Rawdon turned quite pale, and looked as if she were going to faint. Then Belle dropped her broad white lids again, took once more to counting her fan-sticks, and drawled out, in a low and level voice:

"Yes, just so; but, you see, at eighteen it is rather late to consider a girl as a child, and Major Crewkherne is a good match where there is no fortune."

Which last observation affronted Mrs. Rawdon, and destroyed all her sympathy for Miss Loder's disappointment.

If riches give social influence, knowledge gives moral power; and not Mr. Darcy Crewkherne himself, when he was alive—and he had been the king of those parts, so to speak—had the hold on the people that Dame Hagley had, Mary Bernal's aunt. To the outer eye she was just a tall, dark-browed, powerful, and still handsome woman, of about sixty, living in a solitary mud hovel set in the heart of a wild and desolate combe or valley, where nothing grew on the hill-sides save gorse and bracken and heather, and where even sheep could find no pasturage; but to the eye of faith she was greater than the greatest, holding the power of the viewless ones of the air in her hand, and holding with these the keys of life and death. Yet if spirits thronged to do her bidding, they were spirits of less malevolence, if of greater power, than those which obey the black witch. It was the black witch who banned, and Dame Hagley who removed the ban at the grievous cost and suffering of the former. And it was well known that not the wickedest old witch or wizard of them all but trembled before her, and had cause to repent her evil deeds if Dame Hagley took her in hand.

"That cursed little girl has bewitched the major, and my aunt shall know the rights of it," said Mary Bernal to herself, when she heard the news; it was Miss Belle herself who told her. "I'll go over to Combe Andrew to-morrow."

It was a hot and fiery sunset when Mary, getting leave for the evening, set out to her aunt's. It was a brave thing of her to do, for the way was lonely, and not only the valley had a bad name, but many a place

by which she had to pass. Years ago there had been a murder on the cliffs, and the body had been buried in the very hovel where Dame Hagley lived; then a child had been found cast like a dead sheep in a deserted quarry; and a man had committed suicide at the entrance of the combe. So that, on the whole, it was an awful district all round, and one cause of Dame Hagley's influence was that she dared to live where others dared hardly pass. But her very living there added to the general terrors of the place.

People wondered when they saw Mary setting her face towards the cliff path; but Mary shared some of her aunt's courage. She "favoured" her in appearance, and it was not thought unlikely by more than one that she might follow in her steps, and take up the trade when the other let it fall. Still, for all that, it was a bold thing for a young woman of thirty to go along that lonely cliff in the evening, with the sun setting so fiery red, and the black loneliness, the haunted depths of Combe Andrew to follow. But Mary had become interested in this matter of the major and Miss Belle, and it was not a little that would have turned her back.

About an hour's hard walking brought her to the point where, deep in the darkness below, she saw a faint glimmer which told her that her aunt was at home. It was almost dark by now, but Mary knew the way, and skirted its dangers dexterously. She was quite free and undaunted, and did not even start when once a straying sheep came full butt against her, and once she nearly fell over the dead carcass of another. Presently she came down the hill, and along the narrow winding way that led to the hovel.

Her aunt heard her step, and came out to the door.

"I knew you were a-coming," she said, quietly; "and I've made your tea."

"That's good," said Mary. "It's a rough road."

The two women were strangely undemonstrative in manner to each other. There were no feminine effusions, no endearments, such as most women of all classes indulge in, but they met and spoke together like two men. And, indeed, handsome and bold and strong as they were, they were not unlike beardless men, and they were like each other. The same low, broad brow, the same firm eyebrows, the same dark and steady eyes, the same fleshy lips tightly shut, so cruel in repose, so sweet when smiling, and the

same commanding height. They were, as much alike as though they were mother and daughter; and they were equally formidable.

"So you knew I was a-coming?" said Mary, after a long silence, during which she had drunk her tea and eaten her cake with a relish.

"Yes; They told me."

"Maybe They told you why, then?" said Mary, looking into her aunt's face with simple faith.

The older woman nodded. "Yes; They told me that too," she answered, watching her niece.

"And can you do it, aunt? Can you take off the spell?" said Mary, earnestly.

"I never knew of one I couldn't," said Dame Hagley.

"And it is a spell, aunt, ain't it now? She has bewitched him?"

"No fear," answered her aunt.

"What else can it be?" cried Mary.

"What else, indeed!" echoed her aunt.

"There's Miss Belle, made for him, as one may say, brought up together a'most, and with a fine fortune when her father goes. And her father and his too, that wished it so. And here comes this sly little Rose Kenealy, a mere beggar to Miss Belle, and not half so pretty. And there's the major, clean mad about her, and gone and asked her. It can't be right; it must be a spell!"

"It ain't aught else," said Dame Hagley, taking up the clue she had been waiting for. "It is a spell, Mary, and the major is bewitched. Can't you bring Miss Belle here, and I'll let her see the face as has done it?"

Mary shook her head. "It's too rough a road, aunt, and Miss Belle's not over fain to walk."

"You want me, though, to work it?" said Aunt Hagley, coming to business.

"Yes; give me something as'll take it off, aunt. See, I've brought you Miss Belle's hair, and some of that Rose's, and there are nails of both of 'em, and the major's too. I tell you I was clever to get all these, and it's cost me a deal of trouble. But I did it. I don't like to see right wronged, and I did it."

"I'll see to it," said Aunt Hagley gravely. "I dare say you've brought enow. I'll work the spell and then I'll let you know."

On which, with a pack of greasy cards, some spirits of wine, a handful of salt, a pinch of benzoïn, and another of lycopodium, the White Witch went through a series of mutterings and strange gestures;

all of which Mary watched with a steady pulse, though expecting to see in bodily shape one of those great spirits who were, she believed, about her aunt at this moment, doing her service and imparting to her knowledge.

After awhile Aunt Hagley lifted up her head from the saucepan which, alternately with the cards, she had been peering into, and sighed deeply, wiping her face wearily, as she sank back in her high chair, as one exhausted.

"It has been a sore time, Mary," she said; "but I've got the word and the sign at last. Rose Kenealy: there it was written fair enough; she it is as has laid the spell on the major, and you, my girl, can take it off. What would Miss Belle give you, Mary, if you could get her the major?" she asked, suddenly.

"Give! she'd give her ears," said Mary.

"I don't see as how you could do much with them," Aunt Hagley replied gravely. "To put 'em into a stocking would scarcely grow guineas, my girl! No; I mean what would she give in money? hard money—money down, Mary?"

"Lord, aunt, I don't know," said Mary, shocked. It was one thing to do good for loyalty and love, and another to work evil for money. But Aunt Hagley had long ago reduced all life to the filling of her money-stocking, and the only thing she despised in her niece was the indifference she showed, as yet, to money. But she would improve, she used to say to herself; she had good blood, and she would improve.

"It can't be done for nothing, Mary," she said gravely. "If Miss Belle will make it worth my while and yours—and yours too, my girl; I'm not selfish, and I will work for you as well as myself—but if she'll do well by us I'll do well by her; and Miss Rose shall trouble her no more. I'll take the spell off, no fear, but it's worth money, Mary; why, it's worth hundreds of pounds to her, and you'll be a fool not to make a good bargain for yourself now you've got the power."

"I can't ask for money, aunt, for what I do for right's sake," said Mary sullenly.

Her aunt had been all this time putting some powder into a packet.

"All right, my girl; then you'll not have the spell, and Miss Rose will have the major," and she put back on the shelf the small locked box from which she had taken the powder.

As usual, that stronger will had its way, and the weaker yielded. After a faint

resistance, it ended by Mary putting on her bonnet again, and carefully placing in her purse a small packet of white powder, which Miss Belle was to put into Miss Rose's coffee—nothing but coffee would do, said Aunt Hagley—when Miss Rose would suffer as she ought, perhaps fly up the chimney as a bat, or they would see the devil run out of her mouth as an eft or a toad, or something such like would happen to her, and the major would be restored to his senses. And then, being in a good humour—for Mary had promised to ask for handsome gains, and to give her half—Aunt Hagley, without putting on her bonnet, took the road with her niece, laughing a little grimly as she said, "You see, my dear, I ain't no reason to be afraid. I shan't meet much that's uglier than myself."

Would Miss Belle do it? That was now Mary's difficulty. "You see gentlefolks are not like us," she argued. "They won't believe, and they say they know; but it's we as knows, not they. Would Miss Belle believe if I stood her out till Doomsday, and told her what aunt had said? Not a bit of it. But how could aunt have known that I was coming, or about the major and that Rose, unless They had told her? And as for this spell that is to break a spell, would Miss Belle do it, however much she was told?" However, it had to be tried. There was too much at stake for her not to venture.

Mary approached the subject cautiously. Miss Belle was not one who ever made free with servants, and even Mary, who had been with her for years, had to be careful. She was prepared to be laughed at, of course, and Belle did laugh at her, and she let her. She wouldn't join in the laughter, for They were about her, and They knew that she knew them; but Miss Belle was different. And after she had let her laugh she brought her round, bit by bit, to consent to work her charm.

"You see, miss, if there's nothing in it, it can't do no harm; but if there is, as aunt says, Lord, miss! wouldn't it be fun to see a toad run out of Miss Rose's mouth, or a hump grow on her back before your eyes, and she stand there, just a witch, and all the world to see it? If the major is bewitched, why miss, as an old friend and neighbour, you ought to help him to his senses again. It isn't likely that aunt and so many of us think things as isn't. We know it can be done, and we know it can be taken off again. And there's no one like Aunt Hagley for taking off."

All this Mary said in a headlong, dashing, earnest way, while dressing Miss Loder's hair for dinner, the day after her evening expedition to Combe Andrew.

"Very well, you silly girl, I will do it to satisfy you, and show you how absurd you are in your superstitions. I will give Miss Kencaly the charm as you call it, and you will see nothing will come of it. There, give it to me. What is it?"

"This in coffee, miss," half whispered Mary. "Only in coffee, miss; else the charm won't work!"

Belle was sitting before the glass, and the eyes of mistress and maid met in the mirror. The one was flushed, eager, coarse in her zeal, but honest and single-hearted; the other pale, languid, reticent, seeing farther and thinking deeper, and accepting the responsibility of a possible evil, as far as the poles removed from the intentions of the simpler sinner. The one meant an honest counter-charm—witchcraft foiled with its own weapons; the other meant—what? She took the packet and laughed.

"The idea of witchcraft in these days! How absurd!" she said.

"Try it, miss, and then maybe you'll not say that!" said Mary earnestly; and in her endeavour to persuade her to the trial, she forgot all about the bargain she was to have made, and the sum she was to have demanded.

Dinner was over, and the coffee was brought up. All during the meal Belle Loder had been supremely sweet and friendly with both the major and little Rose. The major, whose conscience had its sore points, was quite grateful to her; and Belle thought in her own mind, and wondered if—Rose being out of the way—well, if—

Coffee was handed round.

"Shall I make yours, dear?" said Belle graciously to Rose; and as she ladled out the crushed candy something more than crushed candy fell from her dainty fingers.

"Oh, thank you!" said little Rose, flushing, in her turn pleased and grateful, too, at this thawing of the Loder ice.

She took the cup and laughed pleasantly; and Belle looked at her sleepily through her half-closed lids. Out in the garden, peering from under the blind, another pair of eyes watched her curiously. They were those of the White Witch come to witness the result of her charm; and to claim its price. Not a leaf stirred, not a creature cried; Rose raised the cup to her lips.

"Rosy, give me a footstool, my dear," said Mrs. Rawdon, lazily.

And Rose set down her cup untasted, and took her aunt the hassock. Then she sat down on the sofa, and, nestling close to her, talked in a low voice, forgetting her coffee.

"The fool, why don't she take it!" muttered the woman watching her. "Who ever saw the like of such foolishness—to have it and not to take it!"

The major was at the piano, turning over some songs.

"Belle, do you sing this?" he asked. And Belle, putting down her cup untasted, as Rose had done, went over to him, and discussed the music. Then they both came back to the table.

"Why, your coffee must be cold," said the major; and he looked into Belle's face, smiling that ineffable smile of his that had more witchcraft in it than all Dame Hagley knew. Belle looked back at him, with her large eyes fully opened; and by that look lost the thread. He had the cups in his hands, unsuspecting, unconscious; and he gave one to each girl. At that moment the dog made a bound through the window, growling savagely, and the woman who had kept the thread slunk away among the bushes.

The next morning a great terror fell on the house: Miss Belle Loder was found stiff and stark in her room. She went to bed with the rest apparently in good health, but she must have died about midnight, said the medical men who made the post-mortem examination: three hours after the butler had taken away the empty coffee-cups. Yet, though she had died with all the symptoms of blood poisoning, no trace of poison could be found by any test known to the experts. It was a mystery, they all said, and a mystery it remained. Wherefore, "Died by the visitation of God," said the jury. "Died because you didn't work the spell as it should be worked, and get the money They had bespoke," said Dame Hagley fiercely to her niece. And "Poisoned herself for love and disappointment," went the verdict of the world, repeated by the major's uneasy conscience; but no one added, "Fallen into the pit digged for another;" while only Mary Bernal suspected, and only Dame Hagley knew.

Whatever the dame knew, it did not trouble her long; for not more than a week after Miss Loder was buried, a man going to the hovel in Combe Andrew found Dame Hagley and her miserable home a mere heap of blackened ashes. She had been burned to death in a drunken sleep, with

none to give her aid or warning, none even to know of her danger or to pity her destruction. The ruined hut was never touched. No one owned the place, and not even the poorest squatter cared to build on so unlikely and evilly renowned a spot: so no one dug deep enough among the charred ashes to find the mass of gold which the White Witch had hidden away in her stocking, and which she kept buried under the floor of her hut. And there it is still for any brave adventurer who cares to seek it.

BAFFLED.

I WILL plant a tree for myself, she said,

With clusters of crimson bloom,
Whose beauty shall dazzle the waking sight,
Whose scent shall fill all the dreamy night
With the breath of its sweet perfume.

But the blight fell down with the morning dew,
And the rose-tree died ere its first bud blew.

I will twine a wreath for myself, she said;

Of myrtle, and laurel, and bay,
Whose glory shall halo my living head,
And over the grave where they lay me dead,

Speak of me and my fame away.
But the canker was deep, and the thorn was keen,
And the bright leaves withered her clasp between.

I will carve my dream for myself, she said,

Its loveliness fixed for ever,
A thing of beauty and joy and life;
We will pass serene through the world's hot strife,
I and my work together.

But death's strong hand struck sudden and cold,
The chisel dropped from her fainting hold.

They tossed them aside in a useless heap,
Dead root and blossoms, and half-wrought stone,
Where the river of time flowed swift and deep,
And they left not a trace thereon!

THE BLUEBOTTLE FLY.

A FRENCH ART-STUDENT'S STORY.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

THE change of position, the slight excitement of the adventure, had aroused me from my torpor, and all my spirit was renewed in the interest furnished by the accident. I hoped to find amusement in the recital of the circumstances by my fellow-traveller. But I soon found that I must resign all hope of conversation with him. He was bent on silence, and answered all my eager questioning in short and almost sulky monosyllables.

"How did the disaster happen?"

"Thrown into a ditch."

"What caused it?"

"A cursed fly!"

"The horse stung?"

"Kicked and reared like the devil!"

"Were you ever on this road before?"

"No!"

"Shall you go back to Paris this same way?"

"He must surely have been drinking," thought I, for he answered this question not in words but with a short hysterical laugh, and a shiver which ran through his whole frame; then after staring at me for a moment he sank back heavily, and closed his eyes, evidently wishing to be troubled with no more questions. He was scarcely older than myself. A mere youth in years, and yet the lines about his face and the furrows on his forehead told of dissipation and late hours, and the indulgence of evil passions, while his long damp hair, falling in heavy masses around his face, cast a grey shadow over his brow, which made it look more pallid still. There was great interest to me in this young and careworn face. "What a fit companion, or rather contrast, would he make to my *poitrinaire*!" thought I. "Both are dying of consumption, but while the girl is fading sweetly and tenderly like a withered flower, the boy is mouldering away with the corruption of the grave already full upon him."

Silent and motionless as he reclined, he was evidently under the influence of some strong emotion. His arms were crossed upon his breast, but I perceived that his fingers had clutched the folds of his coat with such nervous grip that the cloth was indented with the pressure of his nails. Sometimes he would open his eyes as if by stealth, and on finding my own gaze riveted on him would close them again hastily, as if afraid of being led into conversation, or of having to bear more questioning on my part. Sometimes again he would turn restlessly on his seat, and then I observed that his eyelids would quiver for a moment, and their long auburn lashes become moistened as if with tears. There was a singular fascination in the whole aspect of the young man. I could not resist the temptation to watch him with the greatest interest. Unlike his companion, he was evidently a gentleman, his countenance was delicate and aristocratic in the extreme, his hands soft and white as those of a woman.

As I watched my companion, my attention was suddenly drawn to what at first appeared a large black spot upon the snowy bosom of his shirt. I stared at it in a kind of dreamy amazement, born of the *petit bleu* administered by *Père Ajax*, then began to wonder what on earth it could possibly be, and last of all to marvel, always dreamily, and staringly, and stupidly, why I had not perceived it before. There seemed a magic fascination in this same black spot, for I could not withdraw my gaze from the

one peculiar plait in the shirt where it lay; and I was just closing my eyes in a sort of drowsy fatigue, when I started convulsively, for the black spot suddenly began to move, and crawling lazily along the embroidery was slowly progressing upwards. It was nothing but a large blue-bottle fly, one of the heavy, swollen, unwieldy kind belonging to the butchers' shambles; so dreaded of drovers and agriculturists; so hated in the markets; so nauseous and detestable, that a cruel superstition is attached to the influence of its approach, for it is believed by the people to possess the keen instinct of the vulture and the wolf, in the track of blood, and to follow with the same tenacity the scent of approaching death. Whence the creature came or how it alighted there I could not tell, but there it was, wending its way slowly and heavily upwards towards the young man's face! My whole attention became absorbed in its movements. The mouth of the sleeper was still open, his breathing still short and laboured. Will the foul insect ascend to his lips? Yes, there it is crawling along the sharp edge of the embroidery! No, with a sudden leap and a short and angry buzz it has descended again, and creeps along the heavy gold chain which crosses the waistcoat, balancing its bloated carcass with its slightly extended wings as neatly as any rope-dancer with his balance-pole! Anon, the creature with a sudden spring and with a burst of sound so loud as to seem perfectly inconsistent with its size, has reached the collar. The young man is still heedless, his eyes are still closed, and his mouth still open, for his jaw has gradually drooped, and bestows a yet more ghastly expression on his countenance. The puny insect, now grown a monster in my sight, is actually creating such a painful apprehension in my mind that I can no longer sit still.

The short dry breath, issuing with painful effort from the slumberer's lips, agitates the wings, and yet the creature moves not, neither does the youth arouse himself, or brush the noxious visitor away. There is no one gifted with the artist's temperament, the irritable nerves, the vivid imagination, who will not understand the excitement under which I laboured, as I behold the gradual progress of the enemy towards the open mouth of the seemingly inanimate figure before me. Slowly, slowly, dragging its slimy weight along, over the damp meshes of his hair, did it finally stand fixed upon the blonde moustache, and, as it remained there motionless, my

whole frame shook with the nervous terror which seized upon me lost—— But no, the idea was too horrible; and yet imagination would revert to the old German legend of the Linden Tree, and as I stared at the creature standing there, my lips moved as I murmured forth the lines that had made such impression on me when a boy. I had not remembered them for years, but suddenly they rushed to my memory, as though I had but just that moment heard them crooned forth, as in days of old, by the old German Frau who had nursed me in my childhood:

And the knight lay under the linden-tree,
Despite of his wound still fair to see.
But a great black-beetle sate on his chin,
Watching his mouth that he might crawl in!
Tranquil and mute like the beggar that waits
For his dole of bread at the convent gates;
Counting the minutes, and cursing the time
(For the wicket is closed until noonday chime);
Thus the beetle abides on the dead man's chin,
Till his jaw shall drop, and then he'll crawl in!

And then as I closed my eyelids tight, and pressed my hands one over the other in such violent grasp that my nails almost entered the flesh, this horrid image likewise died away, and another one, still more horrible, arose in its stead, and I beheld the guillotine at the Barrière du Trône, as described by Samson, and the hideous wicker-basket into which the heads were falling. "And as each head rolled into the bloody mass, there arose a cloud of flies from the sawdust, which caused a shout of laughter amongst the populace. Whilst the cry of 'Catch 'em, Samson! catch 'em, Samson!' issued in mockery from the troop of boys who had climbed the lamp-posts of the Octroi, for they were all nobles on that day, who had taken care to have their heads all dressed with powder and pomatum before leaving the prison, as they wished to make a decent appearance before the canaille, and it was the perfume of the maréchal powder and the scented essence of jessamine which had attracted this unusual number of flies round the basket." Then again arose before my mental vision the head of Berthier, carried aloft on a pike through the streets of Paris, "and followed by such a swarm of flies that the bearer was compelled to agitate the pike to and fro every now and then in order that the hair worn in long pigtail and ailes de pigeon, according to the fashion of the court, by whisking suddenly round, might brush the buzzing multitude away, and disperse the nuisance, which, as the day advanced, grew more and more troublesome." I had just been reading Prudhomme's Journal, and his account of the

horrid scene was still fresh in my recollection.

As I retraced every detail of the piteous story, and thought over the very words in which the historian had related it, the excitement with which I watched the nauseous insect before me had gradually grown greater until I had unconsciously bent forward by degrees, and my face had come almost into contact with that of the stranger. The agitation of my nerves had now increased to such an extent that at last I felt quite ashamed of my own want of self-control, and passing my hand through my hair, inquired if this really could be myself, who was thus abiding, perplexed and amazed, before the movements of a miserable insect whose very existence I could obliterate by the slightest flip of my finger. By Heavens! now that I thought of it, the temptation was not to be resisted! I folded my hand in the fashion I had learned at school, and perfected by long practice at the studio, resolving to annihilate the creature at once, and, moreover, to accomplish the feat so lightly and so steadily, that if the stranger were really asleep he should not even be awakened from his slumber, just as we used to do to old Rabâche, when in summer the flies settled on his bald head, where they had been invited to assemble by the powdered sugar artistically dropped thereon while he was bending over our performances, and training our crooked lines in the way they should go.

But just at that very moment the creature before me began once more to crawl. The pursuit assumed to my excited fancy the proportions of a chase, and we all know how utterly beyond control are the feelings on such an occasion. Unable to restrain my eagerness, instead of proceeding softly as I had intended, I dashed forward in the most awkward and uncouth manner possible, losing my balance in the frenzy of the moment, and fell upon the young man's bosom with a shock that made the tin case slung across my chest rattle with a startling sound, and the long bag of green baize fall from the outside passenger's knees against the swing-board; its contents, whatever they were, rattling and jingling with a sharp and irritating sound, exactly like that produced by my tin case. The youth started, and the colour came faintly into his cheek, while I stammered forth the most earnest excuses for my awkwardness. But even this shock, rude as it was, did not seem to arouse the young man from his listless attitude. He stretched out his

limbs and yawned. He was very pale, and the dark rings around his eyes seemed somehow to have grown darker than before. The nervous twitching of his fingers and the quivering motion of his eyelids were renewed, and I could not be mistaken when I fancied that his grim friend on the swing-board looked anxiously towards him once or twice, as he made a sign towards the end of the road where the Three Acacias were now visible, tossing their feathery arms to the sky, and seeming to throw light as well as shadow on the space where they stood.

For me, however, all interest was absorbed in my search after the bluebottle fly. It was nowhere to be seen. It had disappeared, scared away, no doubt, by the noise. "It must have flown through the window of the coucou," thought I. And I cannot tell what a relief it was to my heated imagination to find that the creature was gone.

It was not till this conviction had been fully impressed upon me that I turned again to the young man to offer my timid excuses for the apparent rudeness of which I had been guilty. I told him the cause of my brusque attack, and apologised in the choicest terms I could command for the shock I must have occasioned to his nerves. But the youth was evidently too much pre-occupied, or too indifferent at that moment to take offence. He turned a dull heavy gaze upon me, and said:

"Ah, yes! Well I don't wonder—that cursed bluebottle fly! I thought I saw the coachman crush it with the butt-end of his whip! Already did *Bras-de-Fer*," and he pointed with his thumb to the man with the green-baize bag sitting on the swing-board, "declare it must have been the devil himself to have pursued us all the way from Paris only to get us kicked into the ditch. The devil, you know, whose memoirs were written by *Eugène Sue*. Don't you remember? In the diligence, where the abbé tries in vain to divert his thoughts from the lady at his side, and is prevented from perusing his breviary by the persecutions of a bluebottle fly, every time he tries to fix his attention on his prayers? *Bras-de-Fer* never meant to compare my innocence with that of the abbé, you know; quite the reverse. He said that the devil would never have needed to disguise himself for my temptation, if a pretty girl had sat beside me!" And he uttered a weak fumeless titter, the very senility of vice before even its powers were developed.

The foolish laughter without mirth

grated on my taste, and I answered sharply that never having read *Eugène Sue's* novel (which I really had not at that time) I could not judge of the comparison; but that my abhorrence of the horrible insect arose from the superstition of its being gifted with the power of scenting blood, and that its presence conveyed a warning of death or dire misfortune to those honoured by its visit. "But of course you are no believer in such things," added I, on observing the start with which the youth had listened to the words.

"Perhaps not—perhaps not," he gasped forth, turning deadly pale and clutching me by the arm with a force of which I should scarcely have deemed him capable, judging by his languid movements and apparently feminine weakness. And then before I had recovered from the astonishment into which his sudden action had thrown me, he had withdrawn his grasp, exclaiming in a tone of childish triumph, "And look you, my friend, if there be aught of truth in the belief, I shall not be alone to suffer, for see, you too must be destined to share in the misfortune."

With a hoarse mocking laugh he flung himself back into his seat, pointing to my shoulder, where my eyes, following his gesture, beheld with horror the loathsome insect which had occasioned all this turmoil actually standing there, seeming to mock me with its cool impudence, and its unconsciousness of all the repulsion with which I gazed upon it. I started up in dismay and shook myself with violence, brushing down the sleeve of my blouse with many an exclamation of disgust. As my rough motion dislodged it, I could distinctly hear its shrill trumpet and the droning buzz which followed, even above the clatter of the horse's hoofs and the creaking of the coucou. The youth laughed aloud with a kind of fiendish delight at the excitement I displayed, then resumed his listless look, and spoke no more. Once he raised the striped curtain at his back and gazed out towards the Three Acacias, then dropping it, suddenly turned away, as a slight colour overspread his cheek and brow, dispelling for a moment its death-like pallor. Was it the excitement of pleasure or of pain? The anticipation of meeting with his riotous companions, or annoyance at being compelled to exertion while still overcome with the fatigue and languor, which I felt sure were the consequence of the orgies of the previous night?

But I did not pause long in further contemplation of my fellow-traveller. To re-

main thus, confined within that narrow space, with the idea of the continued presence of the hateful fly, was impossible. I beheld it everywhere. I followed the trail of the obnoxious creature amid the tracery of the pattern of the oil-skin lining, detecting its hated presence amongst the folds of the striped curtains, discovering its hideous form in every little shadow, starting with nausea whenever the breeze uplifted the calico, and shuddering with disgust at the rustling sound it made. My brain got distracted and my ears filled with its imaginary hum, until at last, unable to collect my thoughts amid this torture of the nerves created by my fancy, I called aloud to Tony to stop the vehicle, and without a word of courtesy to my fellow-traveller, I jumped to the ground without so much as alighting on the iron step, and plunged blindly into the wooded dell that bordered the alley, up which we were driving to the rising ground, where stood the Three Acacias.

BOLD ROBIN HOOD.

DURING a period reaching nearly four hundred years back, the press has put forth many ballads, tales, narratives, and other compositions relating to that redoubtable but mysterious personage, Robin Hood. It was not very long after the introduction of printing into England that Wynkyn de Worde, about three hundred and eighty years ago, printed the *Lytel Geste of Robyn Hode*—the forerunner of a long series, varying in importance from single broad-sheets to goodly volumes. But the manuscripts are of much earlier date. The earliest mention of these ballads, in any work at present known to exist, is in Robert Longlande's *Vision of Piers Plowman*, written in the reign of Edward the Third. Piers states very frankly, that although he is not quite perfect in the *Paternoster* or *Lord's Prayer*, he knows the song of *Robyn Hode*. The *Lytel Geste*, above mentioned, seems to have been a stringing together of songs and tales long current among the people, some written down, some merely repeated from mouth to mouth. Four hundred and sixty stanzas are devoted to a narration of the daring, odd, shrewdly-devised achievements of Robin, so linked as to furnish a kind of metrical biography. Additions were made during the Tudor times; and it is known that a pastoral comedy called *Robin Hood* was played in London towards the close of Elizabeth's reign.

During nearly the whole of the next century, in the reigns of the two Jameses and the two Charleses, ballads of Robin Hood, mostly printed in black letter, were hawked about the villages, and sung in a kind of recitative. A collection of these was gradually made, and published under the title of *Robin Hood's Garland*; numerous editions were afterwards printed, introduced by what professed to be the life of the hero. With the *Geste* and the *Garland* together, and other ballads and stories from time to time ferreted out by Ritson, Hunter, Stukely, Cunningham, Planché, Gutch, Chappell, and other investigators, the Robin Hood literature has become somewhat considerable.

What, then, are these ballads and tales? What do they tell us? The central figure of the whole of them is a bold outlaw, an expert bowman, who is virtually lord of Sherwood Forest, and the terror of nobles, magistrates, and priests; but he is kind to the poor, and a respecter of women. The foresters and villagers would rather shield him from the authorities, than aid in capturing him. He gradually surrounds himself with a body of companions, among whom are Little John, Will Scarlet, Friar Tuck, Will Stukely, Arthur-a-Bland, George-a-Green, and a fair damsel named Maid Marian; and one or other of these is generally associated with him in the exploits to which the ballads relate.

Robin Hood and Little John, we are told in one ballad, first encountered each other in this fashion. Robin, a young outlaw of some twenty summers, was roaming the forest one day, when he met John Little, a strapping fellow seven feet high; they met while crossing a wooden plank over a stream; neither would give way; so they fought with quarter-staves till John fairly knocked over Robin into the stream. The outlaw admired the pluck of his conqueror; and the two henceforth became fast friends. Will Scarlet was added to the band by some equally unexpected adventure; and one of the ballads tells how Robin won the heart of Will Stukely by rescuing him from a sheriff's officer. As to Friar Tuck, he is certainly one of the most remarkable members of the community. We are told all about him in a ballad of forty-one verses (they were not frightened at the length of their songs in those days):

In the summer time, when leaves grow green,
And flowers are fresh and gay,
Robin Hood and his merry men
Were all disposed to play.

They had a friendly bout at archery, and

made some good shots; whereupon Will Scarlet declared that he knew a curtell friar who could beat any of them. What this word curtell meant is not now quite certain. Some suppose it to have referred to a cordelier or corded friar, in allusion to the cord or rope worn round the waist by Franciscans, wherewith to flagellate themselves; whereas others suggest that it refers to a friar who wore a curtailed or short tunic. Be this as it may, Robin set forth to seek this curtell friar, who was known as Friar Tuck of Fountains Abbey. They met, and the contest between them was of so marvellous a kind that one might wonder how the ballad ever obtained credence, were it not that the appetite for the marvellous is known to have been singularly keen in those days. Suffice it to say that the strength, skill, and boldness of the friar quite charmed Robin, who induced him to become a member of the forest band. Another, Allen-a-Dale, was won over by a kindness rendered to him on an occasion of doleful sensitiveness. One day,

Robin Hood in the forest stood,
All under the greenwood tree,

when he saw a gaily-attired young man pass by, singing right merrily. On the following day he again saw him, but depressed with woe. Robin accosted him, and asked the meaning of the change. The youth stated that on the previous day he was going to be wedded to his betrothed, but found that her cruel father was forcing her to marry a rich old baron. Robin started forth for the church, and got there just in the nick of time. He ascertained that the youth and the maiden loved each other, whereupon he blew his horn, and his merry men (who always seem to have been close at hand whenever he wanted them) came into the church, and compelled the priest to marry the maiden to Allen-a-Dale.

Robin was evidently fond of fighting, for he liked the men who thrashed him as well as those who were thrashed by him. Arthur-a-Bland, the tanner, furnished a case in point. A rattling ballad tells us that

In Nottingham there lives a jolly tanner,
With a hey, down, down, and a down!
His name is Arthur-a-Bland;
There is ne'er a squire in Nottinghamshire
Dare bid bold Arthur stand.

It chanced that Robin and Arthur met in the forest; a small incitement was sufficient to bring on a contest, in which Arthur was the victor. It then transpired that he was a kinsman of Little John; he joined the band, and Robin, John, and Arthur danced the Three Merry Men's Dance.

As to Maid Marian, she seems to have fallen in love with the hero while yet unknown to him, and to have adopted a mode of revealing her attachment quite orthodox in romance and poetry:

A bonny fair maid of a noble degree,
With a hey, down, down a down down,
Maid Marian called by name,
Lived in the north, of excellent worth,
For she was a gallant dame.

She went to Sherwood in male attire, met Robin, contrived to fight and to be worsted, to yield and to confess, and she became, we will suppose, Mrs. Robin Hood.

One of the ballads relates to Little John and the Four Beggars, showing how he pretended on one occasion to go begging, and met with four hale beggars, who professed to be dumb, deaf, blind, and crippled respectively; how he exposed them, and punished them for their deceit by robbing them of three hundred pounds. Another, a ballad of fifty-eight verses, narrates how Robin Hood, Little John, and Will Scarlet won a victory over the Prince of Aragon and two giants, and how the contest ended by Will marrying a princess who had been rescued from peril. In Robin Hood and the Shepherd, told in twenty-seven verses, a shepherd gets the better both of Robin and of John in turn, and is consequently held in high esteem by Robin. In Robin Hood's Golden Prize we learn in what fashion he robbed two priests of five hundred pounds. Priests and bishops he seems always to have regarded as fair prey: Witness Robin Hood and the Bishop:

Come, gentlemen all, and listen awhile,
With a hey down, down, and a down;
And a story to you I'll unfold.
I'll tell you how Robin Hood served the bishop,
When he robbed him of all his gold.

He got him into the forest by a ruse, tied him to a tree, emptied his pouch, and then made him sing a mass. In Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford, another ballad, the bishop is made to dance in his boots after being despoiled. Robin Hood and the Butcher tells us of an odd prank, in which the hero went to Nottingham, pretended to be a butcher in the marketplace, and created quite a ferment among the fraternity:

But when he sold his meat so fast,
No butcher by him could thrive;
For he sold more meat for a penny,
Than others could do for five!

In Robin Hood and the Jolly Tinker, we have one of the many instances in which a good fight leads to fast friendship. A certain tinker was armed with a warrant to capture Robin, who was not aware of this fact at the first encounter:

And as he came to Nottingham,
A tinker he did meet,
And seeing him a lusty blade,
He kindly did him greet.

When Robin found on what errand the tinker was engaged, they settled the matter with the quarter-staff; the result was, as usual, an addition to the members of the band. The Pindar, or pound-keeper, of Wakefield was another hero :

"In Wakefield their lives a jolly pindar,
In Wakefield all on the green,
There is neither knight nor squire," said the pindar,
"Nor baron so bold, nor baron so bold,
Dare make a trespass in the town of Wakefield,
But his pledge goes to the penfold."

Robin Hood, Little John, and Will Scarlet, in some way contravened this rule; whereupon the pindar boldly grappled with all three :

He lean'd his back fast unto a tree,
And his foot against a thorn,
And there he fought a long summer day,
And a summer's day so long,
Till their swords in their broad bucklers
Were broken close to their hands.

Robin so admired the pindar, that he induced him to join the band. One of the ballads declares that Robin Hood slew in an encounter fifteen men who had doubted his courage; and this, too, when he was only as many years old. It opens thus :

Robin Hood was a tall young man,
Of fifteen winters old,
Derry ding dong !
And Robin Hood was a proper young man,
Of courage stout and bold,
Hey derry ding dong !

On one occasion he met a lady weeping. On inquiring into the cause, he found that three of her sons were to be executed at Nottingham for killing the king's deer. This was quite enough for him; he resolved to effect a rescue. Proceeding to the city he sought an interview with the sheriff, professed to be earnest in the king's cause, and asked to be permitted to fill the office of hangman, with the only further privilege of being allowed to make one blast on his horn. The sheriff assented, the arrangements were made, Robin blew his horn, whereupon a hundred and ten of his merry men suddenly appeared. The sheriff, thus knowing who was his formidable visitor, speedily consented to let the three prisoners escape :

"Oh take them, oh take them," says great master sheriff,
"Oh take them along with thee;
For there's no'er a man in all Nottingham,
Can do the like of thee!"

It is noteworthy that Robin, in the midst of his wild achievements, was credited with a reverence for the religious services of the church. That this reverence did not ex-

tend to the ecclesiastics is clear enough; his exploits show this, as does a couplet in one of the ballads :

Theyse byshoppes and theyse archebysshoppes,
Ye shall them bete and bynde!

Nevertheless, in his own queer way he had a kind of piety. A very ancient ballad contains four stanzas which notice this characteristic in a curious way :

"This is a mery mornynge," said litulle Johnne,
"Be hym that dyed on tre,
A more merry man than I am one
Lives not in Christiante."

"Pluck up thy hert, my dere mayster,
Titulle Johnne gan say,
"And think it is a ful fayre time,
In a mornynge of May."

"Ze on thyngo greves me," said Robyne
"And does my hert mych woo,
That I may not so solem day
To mas nor matyns goo."

"Hit is a fourtinet and more," said hee,
"Syn I my Sauyour see;
To-day will I to Notyngnam,
With the myght of mylde Marye."

He went, but the seriousness of his errand did not prevent him from playing one of his pranks in the city.

Among the persons with whom Robin, or some of his men, came in contact in various adventures, were the Abbot of St. Mary, the Potter, the Beggar, the Stranger, the Ranger, Sir Richard, and the King, all forming the subjects of distinct ballads. The king, we are told, was the means of bringing the outlaw back to a more regular course of life. Going to Sherwood Forest, with a view of seeing this redoubtable Robin Hood, and accompanied by a force sufficient to insure a capture, the king graciously offered pardon on conditions which Robin accepted. More than one of the ballads tell of the hero's death. He fell sick, and went to a religious house in Yorkshire, the abbess of which was a kinswoman of his. She bled him, and allowed him to bleed to a fatal degree—treacherously, as the songs assert. He longed to see the greenwood once again, and shoot one more arrow before he died. A paraphrase on the old rhymes has been prettily rendered by Bernard Barton :

They rais'd him on his couch, and set
The casement open wide;
Once more, with vain and fond regret,
Fair Nature's face he eyed.

With kindling glance and throbbing heart,
One parting look he cast,
Sped on its way the feather'd dart,
Sank back, and breath'd his last.

And where it fell they dug his grave,
Beneath the greenwood tree:
Meet resting-place for one so brave,
So lawless, frank, and free!

In reference to the music to which these

singularly interesting old ballads were set, Mr. Chappell, the experienced author of the volumes on the Popular Music of the Olden Time, finds that it was very plain and simple, easy to sing—a necessary condition in such very lengthy compositions. Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford was in two-four time; Robin Hood and the Friar in six-eight time, and in the minor mode; and so was Robin Hood and the Pindar of Wakefield. On examining many of the ballads, in the second line of which there comes a “hey down-a-down down,” or something of the kind, Mr. Chappell finds that they were all, or nearly all, set to the same tune. This was the case with Robin Hood and the Stranger, Robin Hood and the Beggar, Robin Hood and the Four Beggars, Robin Hood and the Bishop, Robin Hood’s Chase, Robin Hood and the Tanner, Robin Hood and the Butcher, Robin Hood and the Ranger, and Robin Hood and Maid Marian. In many of the ballads the last line is repeated as a chorus.

And now, what are we to think of all this? Did Robin Hood ever really live? Was he a reality, or only a myth? There are writers who refuse to give credence to his actual existence. It has been urged, by one or other of these critics, that the origin of the ballads may be accounted for on other grounds. It has been urged that Robin Hood was not a patronymic, but a purely descriptive name, applied to the ideal personification of a class—the outlaws of the olden time. Robin’s fame extended to Scotland and France as well as throughout England. Eugène Sue, in one of his novels, gives the name of Robin de Bois to a mysterious character employed by French mothers to frighten their children. Grimm, in his German mythology, speaks of the hood or hoodiken assigned in fairy tales to Robin Goodfellow and other elves; and it is inferred that Robin Hood may be simply Robin o’ the Hood, not a veritable man, but a mischievous denizen of fairyland. Some settle down into the prosaic explanation that, as there were in the Middle Ages many Englishmen with the surname of Hood, and many with the Christian name of Robin, the chances are in favour of there having been some one man with both names; but that this need not involve a belief in the stories and ballads as being true narratives. A Gloucestershire writer states that, in that county, the peasants often pronounce W like H, converting Wood into Hood, and Robin’s Wood Hill into Robin Hood’s Hill. Hallam says that, in the Provençal pastoral poems of the

twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Robin Hood and Maid Marian often appear as the names of a shepherd and his rustic lover.

There is, however, a greater concurrence of testimony to support a belief that a man named Robin Hood really lived some six centuries ago, and really disported himself as an outlaw in Sherwood Forest. The Reverend Joseph Hunter has found, in a household book of the court of Edward the Second, an entry to the effect that one Robyn Hode was among the vadlets, valets, varlets, or porters of the chamber in the king’s palace. This is regarded as giving some support to the account which forms the burden of many of the tales and ballads, and which may be thus summarised: That Robin Hood was born at Locksley in the time of Henry the Second; that his real name was Robert Fitzoothes, some say Earl of Huntingdon; that he was a wild extravagant youth, who got into debt and difficulties; that he became an outlaw in Sherwood Forest, where he surrounded himself with the companions already named; that he enlisted all he could of those who were brave and bold, and good archers; that he and his bowmen, something like a hundred in number, made war against every one except the poor and the weak, and moved about from place to place when attacked; that the forest supplied them with venison and firewood, while the villagers were made to furnish other necessities and comforts, either by purchase or by more summary means; that the king pardoned Robin, after an interview; that Robin was quietly in the royal service for a considerable time; and that he died at Kirtley Nunnery, Yorkshire, in the reign of Henry the Third. There is, it is true, an awkward chronological hitch here; because if Robin Hood died in the time of Henry the Third, he could not well have been the Robin who lived in the days of Edward the Second. Where the arrow fell resulting from poor Robin’s last shot was on a spot not far from Wakefield; and antiquaries agree that some years ago there was really a grave at that spot, with sods beneath the head and feet ends, and a stone bearing the inscription or epitaph:

Here undernead dis laill stean
Laiiz Robert Earl of Huntingdon.
Ne’er arcir vez az lie sa geud,
An pipl kauld im Robyn Houd.
Sich utlawes az hi an iz men
Vil England nivir si agen.

One thing is pretty certain. Neither antiquary or etymologist will ever kill Robin Hood. He will live in popular belief as

he has lived for centuries past, though not perhaps so entirely unquestioned. Shakespeare mentions him in *As You Like It*, where the duke and his followers live in the Forest of Arden, "like the old Robin Hood of England." Sir Walter Scott, in *Ivanhoe*, brings in a bold archer, named Locksley the Yeoman, as one of the characters. Richard Cœur de Lion pardons Locksley for some misdeeds, and addresses him :

"And thou, brave Locksley——"

"Call me no longer Locksley, my liege, but know me under the name which, I fear, fame hath blown too widely not to have reached even your royal ears. I am Robin Hood, of Sherwood Forest."

"King of outlaws, prince of good fellows," said Richard, who declared that the name was well known, even as far as Palestine; "be assured, brave outlaw, that no deed done in our absence, and in the turbulent times to which it has given rise, shall be remembered to thy disadvantage."

Meanwhile we have many local names to refresh the memory: such as Robin Hood's Well, near Locksley, or Loxley; the Robin Hood and Little John hostelry at Sheffield; Robin Hood's Spring, Robin Hood's Moss, Robin Hood's Wood, Robin Hood's Bow, at Fountains Abbey; Robin Hood's Cap and Slippers, at St. Anne's Well; Robin Hood's Bay, on the Yorkshire coast; Robin Hood's Hill, in Derbyshire; Robin Hood's Stride, in the same county; and Robin Hood's Wind, in Lancashire—where this name is given to a thaw wind, a wind blowing during the thawing of snow, which Robin is said to have declared was the only wind which he could not withstand.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER IV. VISITORS.

ALTHOUGH her mind was sufficiently made up as to the course which she would pursue, Madge thought it would be advisable to take counsel with Mr. Drage, and accordingly, early the next morning, she set off for the rectory. She intended to tell Mr. Drage that Philip Vane was coming to Wheatcroft on a matter of business, but did not think it necessary to explain what that business was, nor to acquaint the rector with the information which she had gleaned by unravelling the mysteries of the cipher telegram. It would be sufficient, she

thought, to tell Mr. Drage that she intended to keep herself concealed during the time her husband was at Wheatcroft; and, by every means in her power, to prevent him having the slightest idea of her connexion with Sir Geoffrey's establishment.

She found the rector taking his morning walk round the garden, with little Bertha trotting by his side. Directly she caught sight of Madge, the child rushed towards her, putting up her face to be kissed, and clinging to Madge's gown with both hands.

"We were talking about you just now, Mrs. Pickering," said the child. "I was asking papa why you did not come back and live here. We should like it so much, pa and I would, and it would be so much more cheerful for you than staying with that cross old gentleman at Wheatcroft."

"My dear Bertha," said Madge, with a grave smile, "I should like to be with you very much, but I cannot come."

"So papa said," cried the child, turning to Mr. Drage, who had just come up. "I suppose as papa cannot have you here, that is the reason he has bought a portrait of you?"

"A portrait of me!" cried Madge, looking towards the rector with uplifted eyebrows.

"Bertha, my darling, how can you be so ridiculous," said the rector. "The fact is, Mrs. Pickering, that when at Bircester the other day, I saw in a shop window a print of a saint's head, by some German artist, and I was so struck with it, that I could not resist purchasing it."

"Yes, and he has had it nailed up over the mantelpiece in his bedroom, Mrs. Pickering; and when I told him the other day that I thought it was like you, his face grew quite red. Didn't it, papa?"

"Now run away, darling, and don't talk nonsense," said the rector, whose cheeks were burning; then as the child darted off, he turned to his visitor and said, "Have you any news, Mrs. Pickering, as you are away from home so early?"

"I have indeed," she replied, "and strange news. Philip Vane is coming to Wheatcroft!"

"Good Heavens!" cried the rector. "That woman has told him of your visit to her."

"Oh, no," said Madge, with a smile, "she has not told him; she will not tell him. She has determined to play the game out in her own way, and to run the risk. No, Mr. Vane is coming with another gentleman from London to see Sir Geoffrey on business."

The rector gave a sudden start, and a

bright eager look crossed his face, but died away immediately.

"He will be at Wheatcroft, then, some little time?" he said.

"He will pass one night there," replied Madge. "The distance from London is too great for them to return the same day. Besides, they have business to discuss with Sir Geoffry which will probably take some hours."

"What do you intend to do?"

"I intend asking Sir Geoffry's permission to remain in my room. In the ordinary course of events, a person in my position would not be brought into contact with company remaining for so short a period in the house; and it is only through Sir Geoffry's courtesy and consideration that I take a more prominent place in the household. I shall retire to my room when they arrive, and remain there until after their departure. The name of Mrs. Pickering, the housekeeper, will doubtless be mentioned occasionally, but it is one which Mr. Vane has never heard of in connexion with me, and will convey to his mind no idea of me whatsoever. Do you approve of what I propose doing?"

"Perfectly," said Mr. Drage, with a nervous and excited air. "It is most important that your husband should not know of your presence in this place. You feel tolerably certain that Mrs. Bendixen has not acquainted him with your visit?"

"I feel quite certain of it," said Madge. "Her last words to me were convincing on that point."

"Then Mr. Vane will stay over the night at Wheatcroft. Who is the other gentleman who is coming down with him?"

"The chairman of the company of which Mr. Vane is the general manager."

"The chairman! Oh, then it is through him that the business will principally be conducted; and Mr. Vane is probably only coming down to be referred to on points of detail. Is he a man likely to walk out much while he is here?"

"What an extraordinary question!" said Madge. "I can scarcely understand what you mean."

"I meant was he fond of exercise? Some men whose lives are passed in the City are delighted at every chance of getting into the fresh air. However, I only asked for the sake of something to say. I think you are perfectly right in what you propose, my dear Mrs. Pickering, and I would recommend you to take every precaution that your intentions are not frustrated."

He spoke in a nervous, jerky manner,

quite foreign to his nature, and half put forth his hand, as though about to wish her good-bye. It was evident that he was anxious for her departure, so Madge, wondering much what could have so strangely moved her friend, took her leave. The rector accompanied her to the gate, and then, returning to his study, turned the key in the lock, and, falling upon his knees, prayed long and fervently.

When Madge arrived at Wheatcroft she found Sir Geoffry in a state of great excitement.

"I have received a letter from these gentlemen, Mrs. Pickering," he said, "and they will be here at mid-day to-morrow. Very luxurious fellows for men of business they seem to be too. Springside is too far distant from London for them to complete the journey in one day; they must sleep at Bircester forsooth. Deuced easy style this Mr. Delabole writes in too; says he has no doubt that, after I have perused the private papers which he intends bringing with him, and listened to all he has to say, I shall be convinced of the excellence of the undertaking, and that he shall carry away the deed duly inscribed with my name. He speaks so confidently that the investment which he proposes must be a very sound one, or else he must have but a poor opinion of my business qualifications. I dare say he thinks it will be easy enough, with specious words and cooked accounts, to get over an old soldier; however, that will remain to be proved. You will be quite ready for the reception of these gentlemen, Mrs. Pickering, and will make them comfortable, I am sure."

"You may depend upon their being made perfectly comfortable, Sir Geoffry," said Madge. "There will, I presume, be no occasion for my being in attendance when they are here?"

"None in the world," said Sir Geoffry, promptly.

"I mean that I shall not be called upon to see them, and that I may keep to my room during their stay?"

"Certainly, if you wish it," said Sir Geoffry. "But you know, Mrs. Pickering, that I am rather proud of you, and——"

"I am a little over-fatigued by my journey, and I dread any introduction to strangers, fearing I might absolutely break down. I——"

"Don't say another word about it; you shall do exactly as you please, and no stress shall be laid upon you. Sensitive woman that," said the old general to himself, looking after Madge's retreating figure, "high-spirited, and all that kind of thing. Does

not mind the people about here, but doesn't like strangers. Is afraid, I suppose, of meeting people who knew her in better days, and who would be ashamed of recognising her in her present position. Now I must once more look through the papers which Irving sent to me, and coach myself up in readiness to meet those gentlemen from the City."

Punctual to its time, the train containing the two gentlemen arrived at the Springside station the following morning, and Mr. Delabole, hopping briskly out, called a fly, then turned back to assist his companion in extricating their luggage from the carriage. There were but few persons on the platform, for it was an early and unfashionable train; but amongst them was a tall, thin man, of stooping figure, dressed in a long clergyman's coat, who hovered round the two strangers, and seemed to take particular notice of them—such particular notice as to attract Mr. Vane's attention, and induce him to inquire jocularly of Mr. Delabole "Who was his friend?" Whereupon Mr. Delabole stared with easy assurance at the tall gentleman, and told Mr. Vane "that their friend was probably a parson who had got wind of the rich marriage Mr. Vane was about to make, and had come there to draw him of a little money for the local charities."

They drove straight to Wheatercroft, and on their arrival were received with much formality and politeness by Sir Geoffrey, who told them that luncheon was awaiting them. During the discussion of this meal, at which the three gentlemen alone were present, the conversation was entirely of a social character; Springside, its natural beauties and its mineral waters; the style of persons frequenting it; the differences between a town and country life—were all lightly touched upon. The talk then drifted into a discussion on the speculative mania which had recently laid such hold upon English society, then filtering off into a narrow channel of admiration for Mr. Irving and his Midas-like power, worked back into the broad stream of joint-stock companies and rapid fortune-making, and finally settled down upon the Terra del Fuegos mine. During this conversation, Sir Geoffrey had given utterance to various caustic remarks, and what he imagined were unpleasant truths, all of which, though somewhat chafed at by Mr. Vane, were received by Mr. Delabole, who acted as spokesman for himself and his friend, with the greatest suavity, and were replied to with the utmost coolness and good

temper. The promptitude which his companion displayed in seizing upon every word uttered by their host as a personal matter was not without its effect upon Mr. Delabole. When Sir Geoffrey pushed his chair back from the table and suggested that they should adjourn to the library, there to discuss the object of their visit, Mr. Delabole said:

"If you have no objection, Sir Geoffrey, I think that this question will be more likely to be brought to a speedy conclusion if it is left to you and me. My friend Mr. Vane is invaluable in all matters of detail, and when we come to them we can request him to favour us with his presence; for the old saying of two being better company than three holds good in business discussions as well as in social life, and if you have no objection, I think the basis of any arguments which are to be made between our friend Irving, represented by you, and the company represented by me, would better be settled by us alone."

Sir Geoffrey bowed stiffly enough. "Whatever Mr. Delabole thought he should be happy to agree to. From the position which Mr. Delabole held in the City, it was quite evident that in such a talk as they proposed to have, he, by himself, would be more than a match for an old retired Indian officer."

Mr. Delabole smiled at this speech. "There was, he hoped, no question of brains or ingenuity in it. If the stability and excellence of the investment did not by themselves persuade Sir Geoffrey to advise his friend to embark in it—and he hoped to embark in it a little himself—no blandishments of his should be brought forward to bring about that end.* It was simply a question of confidence and figures, not of listening to compliments and blarney. He would willingly retire with the general into the library, while his good friend Mr. Vane would perhaps stroll about the grounds, taking care to be within call if his valuable services were required."

His good friend, Mr. Vane, who during luncheon had been paying particular attention to some old and remarkable Madeira which was on the table, did not seem at all to relish this plan. At first, he seemed inclined to make some open remonstrance, but a glance from underneath Mr. Delabole's bushy eyebrows dissuaded him therefrom, and he contented himself by shrugging his shoulders and indulging in other mild signs of dissent and objection. Previously to retiring with Mr. Delabole, Sir Geoffrey, with punctilious courtesy, ac-

accompanied Mr. Vane to the hall-door; pointed out to him where were the pleasantest walks in the grounds, how best to reach the spots from whence the favourite views were to be obtained, and handed him the keys of the conservatory and the gates opening into the home park. Mr. Vane received all this politeness very coolly, inwardly determining to take the first opportunity of revenging himself on Mr. Delabole for the uncereemonious treatment received at that gentleman's hands.

Left to himself, Mr. Vane strolled idly about the grounds switching the heads off the flowers with his cane, and cursing Delabole's impudence for having relegated him to the duties of the second fiddle.

"Make the best of your time, my good friend," said he, stretching himself upon a bench shaded by the overhanging branches of a large tree, "make the best of your time, to swagger and give yourself airs, and show that you are the head of the concern; while I am, or am supposed to be, only one of its paid officers; for within a week, or ten days at the outside, I shall be my own master, and if you attempt anything of that kind with me then, I shall be in a position to tell you my opinion of you in the very plainest language. Don't think I have not noticed of late how very tightly you have drawn the rope which binds me to you! Telegraphed for when I am away, told to go here and there, to find out this and that, brought down here and shunted on one side, as though I were a mere clerk, whose business it is to make memoranda of what may pass between their excellencies! Oh, my good friend Delabole, you may take your oath I will not forget this. When once my marriage with Mrs. Bendixen is an accomplished fact, and I have the knowledge that I am beyond any harm which you could do me, then you shall taste the leek which you have compelled me so frequently of late to swallow. I will put my foot on your neck, as you have put yours on mine, I will—— Hallo, who's this coming this way? One of the gardeners, I suppose. No, by Jove! the parson who was at the station, and who seemed to take such interest in us and our movements. What can he want? He must be a friend of Sir Geoffry's, and makes his way through the grounds as a short cut from one part of his parish to the other. He will see I am a friend of the general's, and will want to enter into conversation. I hate parsons, and shan't take any notice of him."

With this amiable resolve, Mr. Vane

curled up his feet beneath him on the bench, pulled out a cigar, and was just about to light it, when, glancing up from under the brim of his hat, he saw the clergyman standing beside him.

Philip Vane dropped the cigar, and sprang to his feet.

"Who are you?" he cried, "and what are you doing here?"

"There is no occasion for you to disturb yourself," said the new comer, quietly lifting his hat. "My name is Drage, and I am rector of one of the parishes in Spring-side. I am speaking to Mr. Philip Vane, I believe?"

"That's my name," said Vane, shortly, and resuming his seat, "though I cannot imagine how you knew it, unless you read it off my portmanteau, when you were dodging about the station this morning."

"I knew it before I was dodging about the station, as you are politely pleased to say," said Mr. Drage; "I know a great deal more about you, as you will find out, before this interview is at an end!"

"The deuce you do!" said Philip Vane, with a cynical smile; "I did not know my fame had extended to these parts. And what do you know about me, pray, Mr.—I forget your name."

"My name, I repeat, is Drage!"

"Drage—Drage," muttered Vane. "Any relation of Drage, of Abchurch-lane?"

"His son."

"A most respectable man, holding a leading position in the City. My dear Mr. Drage, I am delighted to make your acquaintance." And he held out his hand.

"I do not think," said Mr. Drage, taking no notice of the movement; "I do not think that you will be quite so pleased to make my acquaintance when you have heard all I have to say!"

Philip Vane looked hard at his companion, and noted with astonishment the hectic flush in his cheeks, the brightness of his eyes, the mobile working of his mouth.

"You may say what you please," he said, shortly. "It is a matter of perfect indifference to me. If you were in the City, your father or your father's clerks could tell you what position I hold there. City men are careful of what they say of each other; but you are a parson, and are privileged, I suppose?"

"I am a parson. It was in that capacity I became acquainted with the circumstances, the knowledge of which has induced me to seek you out. You are about to be married, Mr. Vane?"

"The dullest of laymen could have told

me that," said Mr. Vane, again with a cynical smile; "the report was in the newspapers."

"Exactly; but the point I am coming to has not yet found its way into the newspapers, though it will probably be published ere long."

"And it is——?"

"It is that you are married already!"

As Mr. Drage pronounced these words, a chill crept over Philip Vane, and for an instant he felt stupefied. But he speedily recovered himself, and looking his companion straight in the face, said:

"Either you have been befooled yourself, or you are trying to make a fool of me. In the latter case a hopeless and dangerous experiment."

"I should not attempt to put my wits in antagonism to yours," said the rector, quietly, "but facts have been said to be stubborn things, and the marriage register of Chepstow Church, with the signature of Philip Vane and Margaret Piorrepoint in one of its pages, is still extant!"

"Who told you of this?" asked Vane, breathing hard and speaking low.

"Your injured and deserted wife!"

"Is the woman who once passed under that name still alive?" inquired Vane, anxiously.

"The lady who has the terrible misfortune to hold that position," said the rector, drawing himself up and looking at his companion with disgust, "is alive and well."

"And you come from her?"

"No, I am here on her behalf, but not with her knowledge."

There was a momentary silence, broken by Vane, who said: "And what is your object in seeking this interview with me?"

"To warn you that I am cognisant of the position in which you stand; to warn you against the commission of the crime which you contemplate——"

"And to ask for a round sum to buy off the opposition of yourself and your interesting accomplice. Is not that it, Mr. Drage?"

"You scoundrel!" said Mr. Drage. "Do you dare to address such language to me—a clergyman?"

"If it comes to a question of language," said Vane, with a laugh, "I believe that 'scoundrel' is scarcely a term much bandied about in clerical society. As a matter of fact, I have found many gentlemen of your cloth not less open to a bribe than the rest of the world."

"You shall find one at least who scorns to discuss even the possibility of such an arrangement. Let us bring this interview to a close; you will clearly understand my object in seeking it. I came to warn you that if you persevered in carrying out this marriage, I will most assuredly hand you over to the law!"

"And I warn you that if you interfere in my business, I will kill you!" said Philip Vane, savagely.

"Such a threat has no terrors for me," said the rector.

"Perhaps not," said Vane, with a contemptuous glance at his companion's feeble frame; "however, I will find some means of bringing you and your client to reason."

"Stay," cried Mr. Drage, "I did not come here to bandy threats, but simply to discharge a duty. I will take no answer from you now, irritated as you are by the discovery that your position is known to me. Think over what I have said, and save yourself from the commission of this great sin. If you have occasion to write to me you know where I am to be found."

Philip Vane hesitated, then bowing his head, he said in a low tone:

"You are right. Do not think any more of the wild words I uttered in my rage; leave me to think over the circumstances in which I am placed, and the manner in which I can best extricate myself from the danger into which I was about to plunge. Leave me and—Heaven bless you for your kindness."

Mr. Drage looked at him with brimming eyes, and lifting his hat slowly walked off.

"That was the best way of settling him," said Philip Vane to himself, as he watched the rector down the path. "I must push this marriage on at once, and make some excuse for its being perfectly quiet."

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER VI. MISS MARTHA MAKES A PROMISE.

MAY had suddenly stepped from dream-land into a world of reality and bustle. What business could have brought so many people together? Who could have built so many houses; and how did each person know his own? The best novelty of all, and the one which she had most leisure to examine, was the great tall boy who had untied her bonnet-strings, and who was looking at her and talking to her, as if she had been some one of importance—a grown person at least—instead of being only little May from Monasterlea. In a world where such people as this were to be found there was no knowing what one might expect. Since the shock of her disappointment in Katherine from Camlough her imagination had been empty of an idol. Her heroine had vanished; but now, behold a hero! May, with a well-piled plate before her, folded her little hands under the table, and sighed—a sigh of ineffable joy, whose flavour was so high as almost to take away her appetite.

Paul found May a most unusual little person. He wondered if it was her age that made her so pleasant to him. She was not at all grown up, and yet was far from being a baby. He had never known a girl of this age before. It seemed to him that he had never even passed one in the streets. All the rest whom he had seen were either grown-up women or children. But this one was child enough to be potted and treated without ceremony, yet woman enough to be a desirable com-

panion. Her laugh was so pleasant, and she was not afraid to talk, and she had such very lovely purple-coloured eyes!

Mrs. Finiston said: "And this is the little Italian!" kissed May, held her off and looked at her, and kissed her very heartily again. But after this she had no eyes nor ears for any one save Martha. It was on Martha that her eyes had longed to rest. She had wished for, and been almost hopeless of, this visit. She had much to say to this friend. She could not set out for the other world without first opening her heart to her. She might have written to Martha, was in the habit of writing to her. She told her punctually that Paul was an inch taller, and that butter was very dear. But a gnawing anxiety was still stored up in that heart which so protested that it must rid itself of a burden. She had waited and waited, hoping for this chance visit. It is so much easier for a woman to explain herself to a friend, while looking in the eyes or holding the hand, than to put a plain statement upon paper.

"Paul," said the mother, "will you take the little girl to see the shops? They will still be open for an hour."

She spoke pleadingly, and turned to urge her petition by a look. But Paul was already tying on May's bonnet.

"Oh, I hope they will not be shut," said the little girl, earnestly; "I have so many things to buy. Beads for Nancy, and ribbons for Bridget, and a new hat for Con the fool. He has a headache and gets pains in his ears."

"If the shops be shut," said Paul, "we shall only have to break in the doors."

"But I should not like you to get into trouble on my account," said May, as they swept down the stairs at a flying pace.

She was divided between her admiration of Paul's prowess and her fears for his safety. "I'd much rather not make any disturbance," said she.

"We shall see," said Paul, mischievously.

The shops were found to be open. Never was there such an expedition of wonder and excitement. Paul led his enchanted companion first into a large boot and shoe shop, and asked for woollen caps with strings for protecting the ears of fools. He next introduced her to a millinery establishment, festooned with bonnets and head-dresses, feathers and flowers, satins and tinsels, the like of which May could not have imagined. And here Paul politely asked for rosary beads "fit for the pious use of old women in the country." May thought it very odd that it should be so difficult to get the things she wanted. After this they went to picture-shops for cap-ribbons, and to a jeweller's for sugar-stick. In the end, however, and after much perseverance, they succeeded in getting all they had been seeking for—and something more besides. For Paul, happening to have, by accident, the price of a pair of new boots in his pocket, recklessly expended half the sum on a cross of bog oak for May. It was handsomely carved, and hung round her neck by a pretty black chain. May was so absorbed and transfixed by gratitude and surprise, that he had almost to carry her over the next two crossings to save her from being run down by the jaunting-cars. And as his mind was rather uneasy about the money, he soothed his conscience by laying out the other half on a pretty new Bible for his mother. He resolved to wear his boots for another half-year. He would send them to the cobbler, and entreat the sullen servant in St. Andrew's-street to give them a little extra blacking every morning for the future. And if all that did not make things right, why, then that disagreeable future must even take care of itself.

Meantime the two friends in the high room had been occupied in dividing the mother's trouble, share and share alike, between two faithful hearts.

It was nothing very new that Miss Martha had to hear; only the old, old story, with the slight variation of Mrs. Finiston's fears about her boy. The little bit of novelty being a vivid expectation of her own approaching death.

"I know you won't laugh at me, Martha," she said, "though, of course, I do not insist that this may not be a fancy. But you know I have been tolerably brave all my

life. For a sick, lonely woman I have had very few whims. But now I believe that I am soon going to die."

Miss Martha cleared her throat twice before her voice was ready to answer.

"Of course I am not going to laugh at you, Elizabeth. It may, as you say, be a fancy. Very likely. But then, as we have all got to die, it may happen to come true. And you would like to arrange for it, just as if it were going to come true. I approve of that. Be ready for a thing, and it is nothing when it comes. If this appears coming, send for me without the delay of an instant, and I have no doubt at all that we shall help each other. There, now, we have faced it. And that being over, let me remind you that I am older than you, and shall probably die first."

Mrs. Finiston choked back a little flutter of the heart. "I could wish to live," she said, "and I will send for you if there is time. In the mean time, I like to have things settled. There is Paul! Suppose I left him now, he has not a penny nor a friend in the world."

"He is the heir of Tobereevil," said Miss Martha, boldly.

"Martha!" almost shrieked Mrs. Finiston, letting her friend's hand drop in dismay.

"Now, Elizabeth, be quiet. There has been a great deal of nonsense talked about that curse, and I believe that it has worked all the harm. If Simon Finiston had not known that he was cursed he would probably never have been the miser that he is. Weak-minded people will submit to fate. The fascination of being marked out and prophesied over is strong for little souls. They like the eccentricity, and fall in with it, and pander to their morbid expectations. Simon Finiston had as good a chance as any man in the world, and his ruin is upon his own head."

Mrs. Finiston was aghast at this speech. She was so utterly surprised that for a moment she forgot her own troubles. Never before had Martha Mourne been heard to condemn Simon Finiston. But the explanation of this outburst was easy, though poor Mrs. Finiston was too preoccupied to see it at the time. Miss Martha had a fine little morsel of sublimity at the bottom of her simple heart. It may be that at this moment the memory of Simon Finiston, as he had been once, was dearer to her than the reality of young Paul in his present state of youthful undevelopment. But Miss Martha saw the drift of her friend's fears, and her handful of dried sentiment was cast out of the way like a sheaf of old

lavender from a drawer. The future of a young man, she acknowledged, was more precious than an old man's past.

The shock of this surprise over, Mrs. Finiston returned to her own affairs.

"But, Martha, Martha! what happens to one man may happen to another."

"I see no fears for your lad," said Miss Martha. "Unlike his uncle, he has grown up quite apart from the dangerous influence. He knows the evil, yet he has no morbid dread of it. And I see in his eye that he is no shallow soul. My friend, you must commit him to God and to me. If you go first I will try to be Elizabeth. I am not a mother, but it may be that it is in me to act a motherly part."

Mrs. Finiston sobbed, and squeezed the spinster's fingers.

"Well, then, let us see. He will one day be called upon to accept the inheritance of Tobereevil. Do as we will the future will place him in that position. You have prepared him well to receive such a trying stewardship. He will be close to us who are his friends. He will bring a generous ardour to the righting of what is wrong. And you know I am not so credulous as some, and I hold that when a person is striving to do his best, the Lord is very likely to step in and help him."

"It is true," said Mrs. Finiston, with many more sobs; "I have sometimes had dreams like this, but the bitterness of my fears always frightened them away."

"And as I have found you so credulous of prophecies," went on Miss Martha, with increased liveliness of manner, "I will venture to foretell something which the least superstitious may expect to come to pass. One Paul Finiston brought evil into the country. Another Paul shall cast it out. We shall see your boy break this ugly spell upon his race, and begin a reign of peace among our hills!"

Miss Martha wound up this little period with a most unusual note in her matter-of-fact voice. And Mrs. Finiston, carried away by the eloquence of her friend, flung her arms round her neck and wept all the remnant of the tears she had to weep. But in the course of a few minutes this scene was interrupted by the young people bursting in at the door, May flourishing invisible purchases over her head, and calling upon every one to admire them in the dark.

"And, oh, such hunting as we have had!" she exclaimed. "We were in at least ten shops before we could get anything we wanted. And it was so much better fun

than if we had got everything at first. And please, Aunt Martha, do come close to the window and see what a beautiful present he has bought me!"

The entrance of a lamp here revealed Paul's face, which broadly reflected the girl's delight. The mother, who knew the secret of the broken shoes, and the friend who did not, exchanged meaning glances. They said to one another without words:

"This lad is not likely to become a churl or a miser!"

As Miss Martha was going out to her lawyer's next day, Mrs. Finiston put her a question which it may be thought she might have put to her before.

"And now that I have time to think of it, Martha, what is this business that has brought you up to town?"

The answer was hard to give, but Miss Martha was honest, and it came out bluntly.

"My landlord thinks of raising my rent," she said, showing some confusion of manner, "and"—here she was looking anxiously over the table for the gloves which were on her hands—"I do not feel justified in complying with his demand."

Mrs. Finiston knew well who the landlord was. Truly old Simon's disease was progressing.

CHAPTER VII. TRYING TO BE ELIZABETH.

MISS MARTHA was right and wrong when she persuaded Paul's mother that her fears of approaching death were unfounded. Three years passed away, and Mrs. Finiston still lived, still languished on her sofa, and paid her son's college fees, and wrote letters to her friend at Monasterlea. But one morning, while Miss Mourne basted briskly about her breakfast-room, she got the news that Mrs. Finiston was no longer in the world. The end had been quick; there had been scarcely any warning, and little time for reluctance and regret.

Then Miss Martha, reading her letter with red eyes, had reason to remember that she had said, "I will try to be Elizabeth."

She would have remembered it in any case, but the special reason which suggested it came in the form of a message from the dead. It was simply, "Go to Simon," scrawled feebly upon a morsel of paper. The dying hand had been unable to write more.

Well, Miss Martha would go to Simon. She knew all that would have been added to those few eager words had there been time. Miss Martha would go to Simon.

Now Martha Mourne was not romantic. Even in her youth she had been remark-

able for nothing so much as simple common sense. The experience of a long life had done its utmost to make her the most matter-of-fact person in the world. And yet there was something within her that made it difficult that she should go to see Simon of Tobereevil. So difficult that Miss Martha would rather have marched into a battle-field in her neat bright goloshes and best black silk, and taken the few odd chances for her life. It was twenty years since she had seen Simon Finiston. And on the occasion of that last meeting she had broken off an engagement, which had then already lasted nearly a quarter of a lifetime. She had sought him then as she was going to seek him now, had spoken to him, and left him before his own door-step. She was not going to have the blood of the poor upon her head, and their hunger-cry in her ears all her life. If he would persist in walking evil ways, why, then, she must let him walk them alone. She had waited and hoped till suspense had gnawed the pith out of her heart. Now she was going away to mend her wounds, and to fit herself for a life of wholesome labour elsewhere. It was in this way that she had talked to him, and left him, and he had walked his evil ways quite alone ever since. It had pleased her later to come back in her independence and settle for old age within a mile of Tobereevil. But it did not please her to confront this old man who could remind her that certain five years of her life had been full of a light which had failed her, and that other ten years had been racked with the worst grief that can be suffered, the ill-doing and disgrace of one entirely beloved. To save herself from death she would not have entered in at that rusty gate and travelled up that dismal avenue. But she knew very well what she had meant when she had said, "I will try to be Elizabeth."

The unkind March wind was making a jest of her all the time, plucking at her gown, and puffing in her face, and singing out a loud shrill song at her expense, that made the tender buds shiver on the trees. It was as hard upon her as would have been any other raw blustering thing that prided itself on youth, and had no pity upon the romance of a weather-beaten heart. Miss Martha often paused to consider her way, for the trees and the weeds seemed to have eaten up the landmarks which she had known. There were no longer any traces of the broad carriage drive. The branches of the trees hung across the path, and the rabbits scampered

past her feet. Here and there a rusted gate barred her way, while a broken-down fence reluctantly allowed her to proceed. And as she made her way resolutely past all obstacles, there were other things besides the cruel east wind that plucked at her sorely. She remembered how many and many a time she had been used to trip up and down that avenue. She saw the moss-covered trunk on which she had liked to stand to get a favourite view down an arch of the trees, thinking pleasantly all the time of what things she and Simon would do when they should become owners of Tobereevil. They would prune and weed, and till and plant, until the wilderness should be changed into a paradise. They would make the mountains glad, and restore the tarnished honour of the Finistons. Then the desolation of Tobereevil had possessed a weird charm for her, as the haunt of an evil genius which was to be banished one day by the force of her strong goodwill. Then the mansion itself, the mansion which was just now showing a cold grey shoulder between the trees, had been as the castle of an ogre, which was to be charmed into a home of all blessedness and happiness. These had been a young girl's joyful expectations. Yet now all that she looked upon was sunk a hundred times deeper in ruin than it had been in the hour of her hope.

Miss Martha did not dwell upon these thoughts at all. She simply gathered up her wits and her skirts, and held both well in control, as she confronted the sour visage of the house. She remembered it well, she had known it morose, and threatening, and woebegone; but she saw now the marks of twenty years of extra desolation on its front. It had gained an air of surly recklessness, and much of its dignity was gone. There was a savage raggedness about its chimneys, and window-sills, and door-steps, tufted with tall wild grass, and fluttering with streamers of the most flaunting weeds. The greenness of the earth had not been content with eating up the approaches to the walls, but seemed resolved to make its way under the very roof itself.

Miss Martha saw the one cow feeding on the lawn, and the few famished hens that were pecking about the door-step. The door was opened by a dreadful old woman, a mass of rags and patches, whose face was disfigured, apparently, by the grime and discontent of years. This was the wretched old woman who was held in aversion by the country because, for some reasons best

known to herself, she had chosen to devote her services to the miser of Tobereevil; to live a life of starvation under an accursed roof. It was doubtless but seldom that she was required to answer a summons at that inhospitable door. She looked as scared at the wholesome apparition of Miss Mourne, as if she had been suddenly confronted with a whole gang of thieves.

All across the vast and empty stone hall, and away in the chamber where he stood at the moment, Simon Finiston heard wrangling at his door. Old Tibbie's discordant voice echoed among the rafters like the sound of a loud quarrel. Miss Martha's tones did not travel so far, but every harsh note of Tibbie's had an echo of its own, and there might have been an angry crowd upon the door-step.

The miser had been pacing up and down his room, being in a humour more than usually timorous. As he walked he twisted his hands together wildly, and at intervals struck his forehead in the agony of his mind. He was beginning to fear that his memory failed him. He was subject to momentary forgetfulness of the exact position of each tittle of his possessions. Sometimes, for an instant, he could not remember in which pocket he had placed the key of the drawer, in which he kept the key of the closet, in which was hid the key of the desk, where lay safely, under heaps of yellow papers, the key of the safe in which a large amount of money was stored. This noise in his hall alarmed him. There were loaded pistols upon a bench in a corner, and he placed his hand upon one in terror, and looked towards the door. The door opened and Miss Martha came in, having vanquished Tibbie, and sent her growling to her den.

"You need not be alarmed, sir," said she, cheerfully, "I am come to rob you of nothing but a few moments of your time."

Then these two, who had been lovers, looked upon one another.

The old man was tall, withered, and blighted-looking, and so ill-clad, that the blast from the door seemed to pierce him where he stood. It was difficult to believe that he had once been handsome, yet the features were imposing, though hacked and notched by the wrinkles and hollows of the flesh. Once the countenance had been pleasant and bland, but there were snarling lines defacing it now that made one shrink from the creature, shadowy as he was. Time had been when the powdered curls had hung gracefully over the polished forehead, when the complexion had worn a

manly hue above the dainty lace of his ruffles, and when his well-cut profile had looked all the more stately from the becomingness of the quaint and jaunty queue. Time had been when no finer foot and leg had stepped down the country-dance. Now the limbs hung lank and limp, the knees clinging together under the patched and threadbare garb.

A violent fit of agitation seized him as Miss Martha spoke. Amazement, shame, and embarrassment struggled all together in his face. It was not the sight of Miss Martha that had moved him, but the sound of her voice. The twenty years had done their work upon her too, and out of the fogs of his puzzled brain he might hardly have recognised her. She had never been a beauty; only one of those maidens whose temper and wit idealise the homeliness of their features in the eyes of all those who come under their spell. A husband who had married Martha in her youth would have gone on thinking her a beauty till her death; but a lover who had not seen her since her youth would now wonder to find that she had altered into a plain-featured woman. The memory would present her as a person of rare charms, rather than a creature of mere freshness and comeliness, shining with good sense and grace. But Simon knew her by her voice. It echoed yet her steady self-containment and simple goodwill, and now that the sparkle had left her eyes, it was the truest messenger of the spirit still within her.

The narrow soul of the miser was stabbed on the instant by the idea that here was his former love come in person to reproach him, to try to assert something of her olden power, so as to wheedle him into lowering her heavy rent. He could not talk to her face to face, and he would not, and as she was there confronting him, and, being nearest the door, in a way held him prisoner, he instinctively put up a blind which might enable him to hold parley with her at ease.

A look of cunning gleamed out of the confusion of his face, and he became tranquil.

"Pray be seated, madam," he said, with an assumption of benevolence and stateliness. He drew his frail garment around him, and sat down on one of the few old carved oaken chairs that were in the room. To the cushions of these still clung a few fragments of the ruby-tinted velvet, which had made some attempt at covering them when Martha had seen them last. The chilly March sun-gleam flickered down

out of the uncurtained window above his head, and laughed over his chair, and lit up the variegations of his many-coloured robe. The room was sheathed in oak, yet the floor was rotted and broken in many places. The spiders had been at work to make draperies for the windows, and cobwebs were the only hangings on the walls. The ceiling had been painted, but the damp had superadded many pictures of its own, whose rude outlines obtruded themselves among flowers, and hid smiling, fading figures under their grievous blots.

"I have expected this visit," said Mr. Finiston, with a courtly air, while yet Miss Martha was trying to right her thoughts, which had been somewhat thrown awry by the first glimpse of the picture now before her. "You are probably a messenger from my tenant at Monasterlea. A relation perhaps. I had the pleasure of knowing Miss Mourne many years ago, and I see some likeness. A very respectable tenant she is, but pays me such a dreadfully low rent—such a dreadfully low rent!"

He shook his head from side to side with his eyes averted from his visitor, and rubbed his hands slowly, and rocked himself in his chair.

Miss Martha drew her breath hard, and gazed at him fixedly. He would not meet her eyes. In a few moments her amazement abated, and her presence of mind returned. She believed that he had recognised her, but she could not be sure. At all events, either his cunning cowardice or his want of memory might make the task she had undertaken less difficult.

"I need not introduce myself," she said. "It is true I am but the messenger of another. I come from Monasterlea, but not upon the business of your tenant."

"Eh?" asked he, sharply. "Not upon your—not upon her business? What then, madam, what then? Not, I hope, with a story from any of these smaller rascally tenants who want their land for nothing, and would drive a wretched landlord to the workhouse? If you come, madam, about them, I will wish you a good morning on the instant. A good morning, madam. I wish you a very good morning."

He arose hastily and made a grotesque bow, a tremulous, mocking attempt at courtesy, and his face had begun to work with a passion which brought out all those snarling lines upon it.

"Stay, sir," said Miss Martha, and her quick steady tone affected him so that he dropped back nervelessly into his chair.

"I am come, sir, altogether about affairs

of your own," said Miss Martha; "to bring you news. Your brother's wife is dead, Mr. Finiston."

He pricked up his ears and sat bolt upright.

"Well, madam, I should not be surprised. A spendthrift creature who could not thrive. She came here to see me with lace trimmings on her dress. But I told her my mind, and I pointed out the destitution that would fall upon her. I understand that her husband died of starvation, the consequence of his improvidence and her extravagance. They would have dragged me down to want with themselves, but I was much too wise for that. I was always a sparing man, madam, and it is thanks to my economy that I have still bread to eat, and have got a roof over my head."

"I find you are misinformed," said Miss Martha. "Your brother died of fever, and he was a happy man, and a prudent one, while he lived. His wife was a very noble woman, who for years denied herself many comforts in the hope of being able to provide for her son. She has died without fulfilling this purpose, and all her slight means have disappeared with herself. I have come here expressly to tell you that her son is now alone and without means of living. And her son, sir, is Paul Finiston, your nephew and heir."

The old man's face had grown darker and more frightened at every word she spoke.

"Well, well, well," he said, hoarsely, clutching his chair with both hands and gazing now straight at Miss Martha, without thinking of who she was. "Heir, she said, heir. Ay! And pray, madam, who says there is anything to inherit? Barely enough property to keep a man alive, with the expenses of a servant, and a cat to keep down the rats. Would you rob an old man of his crust, madam? Would you take it out of his mouth to give it to a young beggar who can work, madam?"

"That is not what we propose, sir," said Miss Martha, unflinchingly. "We ask you to use a small part of your wealth only to help the poor boy to independence. Even a few hundred pounds——"

A bitter shriek burst from the old man's lips, and he got up trembling in a paroxysm of passion.

"Away!" he cried, waving his hand over his head. "Away! you who deserted me in my need, and now come back to rob me! I will not have you sitting there looking at me. I will not——" He was tottering towards her with his menacing hand, but

poor Miss Martha, cowed at last, here rose in trepidation and fled from the house.

She was too old for tears and lamenting, but she walked home from Tobereevil over miles of ground that had grown infinitely bleaker since the morning. The cold March air seemed to pinch her heart.

"You who deserted me in my need," quoth she, tearfully. "Why; was I not patient? was I not patient?" But Miss Martha would have been ashamed to let her doubts and regrets be known. None were in her confidence but the trees, and the primrose drifts, and the chilly blue peaks of the hills. She complained of nothing when she reached home but a slight touch of rheumatism from that pitiless east wind!

In the evening she was still a little ill from her rheumatism, so it was May who wrote the letter which Martha had meant to write. And young Paul Finiston received the following epistle in his garret:

MY DEAR PAUL,—It is Aunt Martha who is really writing this letter; only I am by accident holding her pen. Aunt Martha wishes to tell you that she has been to your uncle, Mr. Finiston, and that she is afraid he will never do anything to help you, unless you come here to see him, when, perhaps, he might get fond of you. I am very glad that you have nothing to do with him, for he is a dreadful old man, and would not give a crumb to save any one from starving. Aunt Martha begs that you will come here and stay. She will give you a nice little room off the cloisters beside the chapel, and Aunt Martha says you are a great deal too sensible to be afraid of ghosts. She has made some new marmalade, and the garden is full of crocuses. I would like you very much to come; but I think it would be happier for you to earn your own money, and never mind that dreadful old man. Aunt Martha sends you a little note, which she says is a loan from me, and may be useful on your journey down here.

I am, dear Paul,

In Aunt Martha's name,

Your very old friend,

MAY MOURNE.

"How odd that the little one should be wiser than the old woman!" said Paul. This is the way in which people think those the wisest who agree with themselves. "I should like to see her again, but I have no time to stay dallying with children."

Paul was a man of twenty-one now, looking old for his age, and feeling himself thirty-six at least. Of course May was

still the little body in the prim grey pelisse, and with the sweet dark eyes. "Afraid of ghosts! Poor little baby! But she has treated me very honestly, and I will tell her what I am really afraid of." So Paul wrote:

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—I received your Aunt Martha's letter, and I approve so heartily of the sentiments of the person who held the pen that I do not intend visiting Monasterlea, nor approaching one inch nearer to my respectable uncle at Tobereevil. I am not quite sure as to whether I could play the part of beggar or not, having never tried, but of this I am sure, that it is best for myself and the old gentleman that some hundreds of leagues of the sea should come between us. Upon nearer acquaintance I might do him some harm. Is there not a prophecy included in that time-honoured curse of our family? I might never be able to forget that I am a kinsman of the miser, and might be tempted to do mischief for the sake of succeeding generations. If you do not understand this, ask your Aunt Martha, and she will explain it to you. Tell her, with my heartfelt thanks, that I am sorry she undertook a painful office for my sake, that I would fain be in the nice little bedroom off the cloisters, but I shall find myself sooner in the rigging of a South American vessel. There is a captain from Liverpool now lying in the docks who will give me my passage for my services. I have here no prospect that I can see, except that of being a clerk or a porter, and I prefer bodily labour in a new country.

And now, my dear little old friend, good-bye. Tell your Aunt Martha that I accept your loan, and will sew it in my coat against time of sickness. Tell her not to count it a bad debt. I commit my mother's grave to her memory and yours. If you keep it in your minds I shall not feel it quite deserted.

PAUL FINISTON.

Paul little thought of the storm which this letter was to create at Monasterlea. Miss Martha turned pale when she read it, and, for the first time in her life, spoke angrily to her niece.

"May! May!" she cried, "what was in that letter? I intrusted the writing of it to you, and you have driven the poor boy across the sea!"

"I did not mean it," said May, weeping. "I only said that I would rather he earned money for himself."

"I told you to write a welcome, and you have warned him away," said Miss Martha.

"Oh, why did I not write myself? The boy will be drowned, and we shall have done it between us. Oh, you cruel, strange girl. Oh, Elizabeth! poor Elizabeth!"

"Aunt Martha!" said May, springing up alert. "Cannot we go to Dublin and stop him?"

"Quick, then!" said Miss Martha. And in another hour they were upon the road.

Arrived in Dublin, they traced Paul from his old dwelling to a humbler lodging. Here they were informed that the young man—a gentleman indeed he was—had left the night before, and gone on board a ship lying at the quay. They hurried down to the quay, disappointed and hopeless, to gaze among the vessels and ask questions. It was early in the morning, and they had been driving over the roads all day yesterday, and all last night. The sun was shining gaily on the bridge as they halt crossed it, and stood leaning over the side. A vessel was moving slowly at some distance, clumsily disengaging itself from the craft around. A faint cheer reached their ears, making them look to this quarter; and May saw Paul on the deck of the moving ship.

"Where, where?" said Miss Martha.

"Oh, Aunt Martha, there! That tall young man with his hat off!"

They left the bridge and hurried along the quay. They came almost alongside of the ship, but it was too far away for anything but signs to pass between Paul and his friends. He had recognised Miss Martha at once, but not so easily the maiden by her side. Her hat had fallen back on her shoulders, her face was flushed with anxiety and grief, her hands were involuntarily extended towards the ship. Paul folded his arms, and gazed sadly at her figure till the ship carried him away, and crowds of tall masts rose up and hid her from his sight. He took her image thus away with him; the loveliest young maiden, he thought, his eyes had ever seen.

LEGENDS OF THE KIFFHÄUSER.

"I HAVE a nice little batch of legends from the Kiffhäuser," began Maximilian, "which I need not tell you is the name of a mountain not many leagues distant from Erfurt."

"Come, come," interrupted Edgar, "you are not going to tell us the old story of Peter Klaus, the goatherd, upon which Washington Irving founded his Rip van Winkle? Please, don't tell us that. We have it at our fingers' ends already."

"So I supposed," retorted Maximilian, "and therefore I meant to pass over Peter altogether. Still his story belongs to the same series as those which I am about to recount, all being connected with the popular belief that the great Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who, according to history, perished in a crusade in Asia towards the end of the twelfth century, is still living in the Kiffhäuser with a number of knightly attendants."

"And I have heard," said Laurence, "that among his retinue is a certain Queen Holle, who acts as his housekeeper, though she played no part in his actual history. She was the daughter of a king, they say, and was cruelly murdered. Her spirit finding no rest in the grave, wandered about without fixed habitation, till at last she heard that the Emperor Frederick had secured for himself a snug retreat in the Kiffhäuser. Having learned that he was a just and kindly man, she proceeded to the mountain, and was only too glad to accept the office of waiting upon the emperor and his numerous retainers."

"I wonder where she heard of Frederick's kindness!" ejaculated Edgar. "The Emperor Barbarossa is a well-known historical character, and this singular Queen Holle, if she ever lived at all, must have died long before his time."

"Nay," observed Maximilian, "I strongly suspect that she is neither a princess nor a ghost, but that she is the Holle of Pagan Germany, who has crept into a Christian legend. However, to show how well her memory has been preserved, I will relate a legend that is not so old as the present century. During one of the campaigns of the Emperor Napoleon in Germany, it appears a French marshal coming to Nordhausen, cast his eyes upon the ruins of the ancient castle on the Kiffhäuser, and hearing that they were haunted, determined that they should afford him a night's lodging. All attempts to dissuade him from his purpose were futile; he slept in the ruined castle, and at midnight received a visit from Queen Holle, who had been sent by the Emperor Frederick for the purpose of bidding him warn Napoleon against the projected invasion of Russia. She added, that if Napoleon valued his own reputation, he would evacuate Germany without delay, since the Emperor Frederick did not like to see his German people subjected to Frenchmen. The marshal, it is said, truthfully conveyed the message to the French Emperor, and made such an impression upon all his generals, that with

one voice they implored him to desist from the Russian expedition."

"And, as we all know, they implored to little purpose," added Edgar. "It is a strange thing that the advice of a ghost is hardly ever followed. But surely I have heard somewhere that the long-lived emperor in the Kiffhäuser is not Frederick Barbarossa, but one of the Othos, whose spirit, in consequence of some difficulties with the church, was doomed to float about for some years after his death, like that of Queen Holle, till at last it found a refuge in the Kiffhäuser."

"Good," remarked Maximilian; "your story is just in accordance with some of the local traditions. And, strange to say, the two accounts of the imperial occupants of the Kiffhäuser are made to harmonise with each other. There is a legend to the effect, that after residing in the mountain for several centuries, the Emperor Otho quitted that abode, which was immediately afterwards occupied by Frederick Barbarossa, who lives there still. Some say that Otho, on leaving the Kiffhäuser, betook himself to his grave, and there rested in peace. Others assert that he merely shifted his quarters to the castle of Quedlinburg, and that he now resides in the cellars of that venerable edifice. His vitality seems to be of a very equivocal kind, for a maid-servant, who is reported to have seen him, represented that he was made of gold, and unable to stir. This notion of gold is expanded into a prophecy, according to which Quedlinburg Castle will one day be burned down, and be rebuilt with the gold into which the emperor's body has been transmuted."

"There is no doubt," said Edgar, "that these exceptional legends point to the first Otho, whose parents, Henry the Fowler and Matilda, were buried at Quedlinburg. The second and third of the name both perished in Italy."

"I perfectly agree with you," returned Maximilian. "The younger Othos were scarcely figures to be prominent in a whole cycle of German legends, and, if I remember right, Otho the Great had a reddish beard, like that from which Frederick derived his name Barbarossa."

"I presume you have more legends relating to the Kiffhäuser. Let us have one," said Laurence to Maximilian.

"Very good," said Maximilian to Laurence. "Once upon a time a poor man of Tilleda, a village at the foot of the mountain, entertained, according to custom, the sponsors for his eighth child. The wine, it may

be supposed, soon ran short, and the happy parent ordered his eldest daughter, a comely girl in her teens, to fetch some more from the cellar. Knowing the condition of the cellar, the damsel, somewhat embarrassed by the order, asked her father what particular cellar he had in view. 'The cellar of the old knights in the Kiffhäuser,' he replied, meaning nothing more than a joke. The innocent girl, however, thought that he was in earnest, and accordingly, with a small pail in her hand, she ascended the mountain till she reached a large cavern, which she had never seen before, and at the entrance of which she saw a comely-looking dame, with a bundle of keys at her side. Though somewhat startled, she stated the cause of her expedition, and the hospitable dame promised that, if she would follow her, she should receive, free of charge, a supply of far better wine than her father had ever tasted. As they proceeded together through a subterranean passage, the strange lady made anxious inquiries as to how things were going on at Tilleda. It appeared that she had once lived in the very house now tenanted by the girl's father, and had been carried off by the knights, who not long before had borne away from Kelbra, a small town in the neighbourhood, four beautiful maidens, who might still sometimes be seen riding about on magnificently accoutred horses. As her age advanced she had been appointed superintendent of the cellars."

"This little episode," observed Laurence, "I find extremely interesting. The superintendent of the cellars obviously corresponds to Queen Holle, so that we evidently have the same person represented with natural and supernatural attributes."

"After a while they reached a door, which, opened by the lady with the keys, disclosed a spacious cellar, on each side of which lay vast barrels. From one of these the girl's pail was filled, and she was told by her guide that, whenever any particular festival was held at her father's house, she might come for more. She was warned, however, not to inform any one besides her father whence the beverage was obtained, and more especially enjoined never to sell a drop of it. A free gift should be freely dispensed, and whoever slighted this sacred maxim would surely find cause for repentance. The wine was carried home, and proved excellent, and a few days afterwards another feast was given, at which another sample of the delicious liquor made its appearance. The poor man of Tilleda was for a time very popular, but soon his neighbours began to shake their heads and whisper."

"Ah," exclaimed Edgar, "when a man is equally famed for the emptiness of his pockets and the excellence of his wine, he can hardly hope to escape remark."

"Of all the inquisitive neighbours," continued Maximilian, "the most inquisitive was an innkeeper, who was in the habit of adulterating his liquors, and who had no sooner tasted the marvellous wine than he was convinced that it might be diluted to any extent, and still command a high price. He therefore took occasion to watch the girl during one of her ascents of the Kiffhäuser, and, having watched her proceedings, and ascertained the situation of the door, set out for the cellar one evening on his own account, trundling before him, on a wheelbarrow, the largest barrel he could find. When he approached the entrance he was overwhelmed by a sudden darkness, and a violent hurricane hurled him and his barrel from crag to crag, till at last he found himself in a vault. While thus uncomfortably lodged he saw passing before him a coffin, covered with a pall, which was followed by his wife and some of his neighbours. He swooned, and when he recovered he was still in the vault, where he heard the clock of the village church striking midnight directly over his head. He was evidently in the burial-place of Tilleda."

"A singular operation on the part of the hurricane," remarked Edgar.

"From his unpleasant predicament he was relieved by a monk," proceeded Maximilian, "who, leading him to a flight of steps, pressed some money into his hand without uttering a word, and, having conducted him through an open door, laid him at the foot of the mountain. Shivering with cold, he reached home by one o'clock, and immediately took to his bed, where, within three days, he died. The money given to him by the monk exactly covered the expenses of his funeral."

"Clearly another story of the Ali Baba kind," said Laurence, "turning on the notion of a good and a bad treasure seeker. The law, however, that supernatural gifts may not be sold is altogether new."

"And observe," said Maximilian, "that an infringement of this law leads to nothing less than the death of the criminal. All the legends of the Kiffhäuser bear some reference to a hidden treasure, though they differ from each other in detail. The story is told, for instance, of a shepherd, who, being too poor to marry his sweetheart, was strolling miserably on the mountain, till he found a flower of singular

beauty, which he stuck in his hat. He also entered a cavern, where he found lying about a number of small glittering stones, which he put into his pocket. Just as he was about to return into the open air, a human voice warned him not to leave the best behind, and immediately he ran outside the cavern, and the door was closed behind him. The flower, which he had stuck in his hat as a gift for his sweetheart, was gone, and what made the loss the more mortifying, a dwarf who suddenly stood before him told him that it was more valuable than all the treasures of the mountain. When he reached home, the stones with which he had filled his pockets proved to be ingots of gold, and he married in comfortable circumstances. But the 'Wunder-Blume' (wonderful flower), as they call it, was lost for ever, though the mountaineers search for it to this day."

"One might almost fancy that two stories are here combined into one," remarked Laurence, "and that the wondrous flower is altogether independent of the treasures of Frederick Barbarossa. It is found, indeed, only to be lost, and this answers no purpose whatever."

"I am not so sure of that," returned Edgar. "In my opinion, the temporary possession of the flower enabled the shepherd to find the golden ingots, and therefore he was, to a limited extent, benefited by its virtues."

"And your opinion is doubtless correct," observed Maximilian, "for according to another legend of the Kiffhäuser, a peasant accidentally trod so hard upon a flower of the kind, that it was broken off the stalk, and remained attached to his shoe-buckle. This endowed him with the power of seeing spirits, and soon the mountain opened, and the emperor and his retinue came out to play at skittles, the potentate in this case being not Frederick but Otho. It is recorded that they played the game in a singular style, not bowling straight at the pins, but flinging them up in the air, so that they hit the mark on their descent. At midnight they vanished, and the mountain closed behind them. A skittle, which the shepherd contrived to take home, proved to be of pure gold."

"This tale does not point to such a good moral as that about the girl and the wine," objected Edgar.

"Certainly not," said Maximilian. "Here is one of an entirely opposite tendency. A shepherd, while whistling a tune near the ruined castle, was asked by a dwarf if he

would like to see the Emperor Frederick. He readily answered in the affirmative, and was conducted into a grotto, the sides of which glistened with golden stars, while the emperor, magnificently attired, sat at a stone table in the centre, with a light burning before him. The shepherd made a low bow, constantly glancing at the treasures of the grotto, till, after a pause, the emperor asked him if ravens still flew about the mountain. On the man answering that they did, the emperor lifted up his hands and exclaimed, in a melancholy voice, 'Then I must sleep here for many years more!' Thereupon the shepherd retired with the dwarf, and to his annoyance did not receive so much as a keepsake."

"That I suppose was because he was the bringer of bad tidings," suggested Edgar.

"I cannot say," rejoined Maximilian. "Possibly the furtive glances at the treasures of the grotto had something to do with it; for, as we have seen, the greed of gain is not esteemed at the Kiffhäuser. So great, however, is the emperor's love of music, that on one occasion he was liberal to a band of itinerant musicians, who played at midnight on the mountain in the hope of being handsomely rewarded. While they were in the middle of the second tune the emperor's daughter came up to them trippingly, and by mute gestures requested them to follow her."

"The emperor's daughter!" cried Laurence. "Queen Holle in another shape!"

"The mountain opened," continued Maximilian, "and they found themselves in a cavern, where a sumptuous banquet was spread before them. Of this they partook freely, and were somewhat disappointed that no one offered them any of the surrounding treasures. They cheered themselves, however, with the hope that they would receive something handsome on parting, and, indeed, when they took their leave at dawn, the emperor's daughter, in obedience to her father's wish, presented each of them with a small green bush. This they accepted with due reverence, but no sooner were they in the open air than they all laughed aloud at the stinginess of their imperial host, and, with the exception of one, flung away the seemingly worthless gifts. The one who had been less precipitate found, when he reached home, that every leaf of his bush had been changed into a broad piece of gold. He communicated his good fortune to his comrades, who immediately began to search for the slighted treasure; but their search was in vain."

"After all," inquired Edgar, "which emperor do you regard as the legitimate occupant of the Kiffhäuser—Frederick or Otho, or both?"

"Unquestionably neither," responded Maximilian. "Though historical names occur in the legends, these have no reference to anything that occurred during the eventful lives of the two emperors who bore them. There is no reason that either Otho or Frederick should be the owner of a hidden treasure. The original occupant of the mansion was no doubt some sort of gnome belonging to pre-historical tradition. The earlier Saxon emperors, of whom Otho is the greatest, was associated with Quedlinburg, and the famous Diet of 1181, at which Henry the Lion was pardoned by his forgiving lord, connected the name of Frederick with Erfurt. These two emperors became especially marked men in the immediate vicinity of the Kiffhäuser, and the anonymous gnome in course of time received two baptismal appellations to which he was in nowise entitled."

THE TWO THREADS.

A babe, who crept from the downy nest
Fond hands had loved to deck,
Glowing and sweet from its rosy rest,
To cling, caressing and caressed,
To its gentle mother's neck;
Another, who shrank in its squalid lair,
In the noisy crowded court,
Dreading to waken to curse and blow,
The woman, whose life of sin and woe,
Won from sleep a respite short.
From the darkness and the light,
Weave the black thread, weave the white.

A girl, in her graceful guarded home,
Mid sunshine, and birds, and flowers,
Whose fair face brightened as she heard
Her gullant lover's wooing word,
In the fragrant gloaming hours.
Another, tossed out, a nameless wail,
On the awful sea of life,
Mid poverty, ignorance, and wrong;
Young pulses beating full and strong
For the fierce unaided strife.
From the darkness and the light,
Weave the black thread, weave the white.

A wife, beside her household hearth,
In her happy matron pride,
Raising her infant in her arms,
Showing its thousand baby charms
To the father at her side.
Another, who stood on the river's banks,
Hearing her weakling's cries:
Thinking, "a plunge would end for both;
Cruelty, hunger, and broken troth,
Harsh earth, and iron skies."
From the darkness and the light,
Weave the black thread, weave the white.

Her children's children at her knee,
With friends and kindred round,
An aged woman with silver hair,
Passing from life, mid the love and prayer,
That her gracious evening crowned.
Another, crouched by the stunted warmth

Of the workhouse homeless hearth;
 Her bitter fare unkindly given;
 Knowing as little of joys in Heaven
 As of gladness on the earth.
 From the darkness and the light,
 Weave the black thread, weave the white.

A soul that sprang from the rose-strewn turf,
 With its carven cross adorned.
 Another, that left its pauper's grave,
 Where rank and coarse the grasses wave,
 O'er rest, unnamed, unmourned.
 And two, who sought their Redeemer's feet,
 By His saving blood to plead,
 May He in His mercy guide us all,
 For sunbeams and shadows strangely fall;
 The riddle is hard to read.
 From the darkness and the light,
 Weave the black thread, weave the white.

THE BLUEBOTTLE FLY.

A FRENCH ART-STUDENT'S STORY.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

FOR the first few minutes I ran swiftly down the hollow, anxious to escape as quickly as possible from the baleful influence of the occupants of the coucou, amongst whom the bluebottle fly had assumed the greatest importance to my fancy. The descent was rapid, and the sound of the grating wheels was soon lost in the distance. I knew this part of the wood well enough. The narrow gorge, dividing the plateau on which stood the Three Acacias from that occupied by that of the White Thorn, was steep and difficult to pass, and visitors in general preferred the broad green alley to this rugged path. But I was too much delighted at finding myself once more at liberty to heed the danger presented either by the loose stones or the slippery moss, and laughed in mockery at my own awkwardness as I alternately stumbled and slid to the bottom. Here I trod the green sward merrily enough, rejoicing in the silence, and looking down each opening between the trees for new effects of light and sunshine. But what was my dismay on perceiving that my nerves had become so completely shattered by the emotions I had undergone, and my head so completely bewildered — perhaps still rather disturbed by the *petit bleu* — that I felt no longer the same eager interest in the beauties of nature that I had done on first starting in the morning. I began to find myself burdened, moreover, with my tools, and much worn by my previous walk, and once or twice wished myself quietly seated in my usual place at the studio.

The hill gained, however, and the White Thorn reached, I felt a momentary return of the hope and faith which had led me

thus far to seek their fulfilment, and began the self-discipline necessary to insure forgetfulness by compelling myself to give undivided attention to the beautiful study spread out by nature's hand before me. The breeze from the opposite hill brought freedom and freshness on its wings; and as I fixed my position and spread my tools all around me on the grass, inhaling the while the intoxication of the scene, I fondly hoped that all memory of the excitement I had undergone would soon be obliterated. I can safely declare that I tried to dissipate my thoughts by every means in my power. I whistled aloud; I sang the tunes most in vogue amongst us; I pulled up the long grass and nibbled it between my teeth, and then set to work at arranging my colours and crayons with that feverish and noisy ardour which never bodes good to the projects of the artist. The White Thorn had long ceased to blossom, but the dead flowers lay in thick masses on the turf beneath, and every time I stamped my foot impatiently a faint perfume arose like a souvenir of the past spring, balmy and aromatic as incense. It would have soothed me at any other time, but just now it served but to add to my irritation. Everything, in short, was at first inclined to assume a green and yellow tinge and flavour, and I was fain to make a desperate effort to clear my brain, and concentrate my attention on my labour. So great is the power of will, especially when aided by outward circumstances, that at last I could view, without any great disturbance of mind, the myriads of flies disporting themselves in their mazy dance over the pool beneath, and could even listen to the buzz of the humble-bee as he flew past, without that twitching of the mouth and quivering of the eyelids which the remembrance of the carrion fly in the coucou had at first occasioned. By degrees I grew more calm, and began at last to recover from the disagreeable impression I had experienced.

I sketched out the valley and the hills of Sèvres which lay beyond. There were certain fleecy clouds gathered in strange groups upon the summit of those hills, and as I gazed intently on their airy and fantastic shapes, all my enthusiastic love of art returned. Nature was victorious. The enemy was conquered, and as I rubbed the clouds in on the coarse grey tinted paper, softening down the hard black chalk into the transparent tint which represented the forms so well, I felt that faith and hope were reviving fast within me, and that I

was myself again. I had just terminated my rough sketch of the view from the White Thorn, to which the clouds I had been rubbing in were destined to serve as horizon—a little too hard perhaps, for my hand had scarcely recovered its wonted lightness and elasticity. But I left the softening to some future time, for I was eager to accomplish many other sketches before the strong glare of noon should drive me to seek shelter in the deep shade of the wood. Alas! the drawing of the White Thorn was *never* softened down, and a long and dreary time elapsed before I completed another. My mother had it framed, however, rough and unfinished as it was, and it hangs over the little font of holy water by her bedside. Poor soul! for many months she thought I would be the last I should ever execute and prize and treasure it accordingly.

The sketch was concluded. The effect was satisfactory even to myself, and I stepped back with true artistic complacency to view the drawing from a distance, and compare it with the original clouds, now fast sailing away behind the Lais, and growing tinged with the reflection of the foliage, while the line of wood was lighted in its turn by the strange blending of both objects into one undefined outline, leaving the gazer in doubt as to where the earth ended, and the sky began.

I had just determined on seizing this effect, said to be the most difficult to produce in the whole range of the landscape painter's art. I was in a rapture of delight. A sudden enlightenment had broken in upon me. I knew I should succeed; I felt that the hour had arrived. Nature herself was whispering in my ear the secret of which I had been so long in search, and in a kind of artistic frenzy I flung myself upon the ground, burying my face amid the grass to listen to her holy teaching.

Just then, when my whole soul was detached from earth in communion with itself, and my very life had entered, as it were, into the new world thus suddenly opened to my sight, I was startled by a cry of anguish—a human cry, so full of pain and agony that, as it broke upon the stillness of the air, every fibre in my frame became convulsed. Strange to say, it seemed so close to my ear that I could hardly believe that it had not proceeded from some one standing by my side, and it was only on reflection I remembered that it must have been brought by the wind across the hollow. The sort of crag on which stands the White Thorn juts out

on one side over the ravine beneath, which is so completely choked up in that direction with brushwood and briars that the view over the wood is completely hidden. Down this very side had been worn a rough uneven path through the covert which lies below; and the joyous laugh of the young artist in search of the picturesque even there is often heard issuing from amongst the seemingly impenetrable wood, startling almost into fits the good bourgeois who has been toiling up the hill on the other side, to enjoy the view from the White Thorn. But no joyous laughter greeted my ear at this moment. The deadly shriek which had caused me suddenly to abandon my work just when I was at the highest point of interest had been followed by a pause, during which the stillness seemed dread and awful as that of the grave. And terrible as the shock had been, the silence which ensued appeared more frightful still!

While I stood pale and trembling, listening with intense eagerness to catch the slightest sound, the boughs of the ravine began to rustle furiously, and I became aware of the gasping effort and the panting breath of some individual striving with might and main to attain the height at which I stood. Presently a hoarse voice called aloud from half-way up the path. The accents were rude and rough:

"Hallo there, you painter; just make haste here, will you, and lend us a hand. Curse the prickly brambles; they are tearing me to pieces! Here, come along quick, for God's sake! The devil seize me if I can get a step higher! We are in the greatest trouble down below, and want your help."

The speaker had opened the branches wide. I looked down to where he was standing with extended arms and head thrown back. In a moment I recognised the military man who had sat on the swing-board of Tony Lanterneau's concou.

"Come quick!" exclaimed he, in a breathless tone. "You must lose no time." And as he let go the boughs on one side, and swung round to stretch his hand towards me, the action was so helpless, so like that of a drowning mariner endeavouring to seize the rope thrown to him amid the boiling surge, that I obeyed the summons almost mechanically, and scrambled down to where he was standing, in actual danger, upon a loose stone which threatened each moment to give way beneath his feet.

"Come quick—come quick!" again exclaimed he in a hoarse whisper, at the same time seizing me by the arm with such

strong grip that he almost threw me off my balance, and for a moment we both tottered, in doubt whether we should not roll together to the bottom of the hollow. But my youth and elastic step soon cleared the difficulties of the passage, and I followed the stranger in bewilderment, the only impression on my brain being that my evil destiny was about to begin once more, and that the hot burning pain on the top of my head, which had begun to subside during that momentary repose I had enjoyed up by the White Thorn, was returning with redoubled violence.

The sudden glare of the strong sunlight as I emerged from the dark shade of the thicket almost blinded me. I felt the rush of blood to my head, and every object seemed to dance before my eyes, so that I could scarcely steady my pace sufficiently to draw near to the group towards which my companion was hurrying. At the bottom of the hollow runs a long narrow gorge—always moist and damp, always soft and green. In this space was gathered a knot of gentlemen busily engaged in some hot dispute, as I inferred from the murmur of their voices, which seemed sharp and angry, and from the exuberance of gesture with which the conversation was being carried on. No sooner had my conductor joined them than they all simultaneously turned to me, and as the group opened I beheld, with horror and amazement, a human form stretched out upon the grass, the head supported by a stone, and the blood pouring from a wound in the throat, so rapidly that its crimson stream had dyed the grass and flowers all around. As I approached I recognised at once in the young man who lay before me, and whose life-blood was ebbing away with such fearful speed, the youth who had been my companion on my ill-starred journey from Clamart. Not one of the individuals present appeared to remember for a moment the awful presence of the dead. All seemed under the influence of some personal fear; two of the party appeared to be engaged in discussion, pointing in various directions, as if in difference of opinion concerning the route they were to follow. One of the gentlemen, in his shirt-sleeves, was bending low to wash his hands in the little spring. I alone knelt down by the corpse, and laid my hand upon the heart to see if it were beating still; but no pulsation was perceptible. The youth lay there with his face turned upwards to the sky, his eyeballs glistening through the half-closed lids, his lips wide apart, just as he had appeared before me reclining in the coucou

scarcely more than an hour ago. I felt as if in a hideous dream, from which the questioning and peremptory suggestions of the party, all uttered at once, and all demanding a reply, had scarcely power to arouse me. The man in his shirt-sleeves, having finished his ablutions, turned towards me his pale, guilty countenance, and, perhaps in answer to my inquiring gaze, began to exculpate himself before he was accused. He said that he had intended to give his adversary but a slight wound, in order to teach him to be more guarded in his language for the future, and not to call a man "a cheat and sharper" because the run of luck happened to be in his favour; but the turf was slippery, and before he could recover himself, he had slipped forward, and the point of his sword being raised at that moment, it had entered his adversary's neck, and the blood had gushed out with such sudden violence that the youth, uttering but one shriek, had fallen lifeless on the grass.

"Ay, but all that will never be listened to by the Procureur Imperial," said one of his companions, hurriedly. "Lose no time, I advise you, in talking, but get away at once." Then turning to me he added: "This duel, lawful and loyal as it in reality is, wears an ugly aspect, monsieur. By an unfortunate accident, the doctor who was to have accompanied the party was left behind, when the coach which bore the unfortunate victim in this affair broke down in the wood; then, the only second on his side happens to be Bras-de-Fer, the fencing-master, with whom he has been in training, and who must have been aware how little he was fitted to cope with Monsieur de Marsiac, the most skilful swordsman in all Paris. Then again the quarrel took place at the gaming-table, where the victor in this combat was the winner of a tremendous sum from the young man he has killed—as he declares—by accident. In short, we must be off at once, ere people are abroad, or we shall have the gendarmes about our ears, and we shall none of us escape easily under such circumstances."

"Come along, De Ferville," exclaimed the individual in his shirt-sleeves, who had been the murderer, for as such I looked upon him, of the poor youth who lay dead at my feet. "We have scarcely time to catch the train, and we have then to get to the Gare du Nord for the Brussels railway. This young gentleman will best know what to do. He will only have to go at once to the commissaire and declare to the loyalty of the fight in which our adversary has fallen. The body must not

be left alone, or it would look like——” He hesitated for a word, but finding none but the right one, spoke it out boldly —“murder!” He had been hurrying on his paletôt the while, and tying on his cravat, and when this was completed he walked with a quick pace down the gorge, and his form was lost amid the hanging wood of the opposite bank. His two companions followed quickly, and soon the fencing-master and myself were left standing alone beside the corpse.

“I, too, must go and hide,” murmured Bras-de-Fer; “but whither? I have no means to fly to Brussels like these young sparks. Ah, that De Marsiac! who shall ever tell whether it was luck or intention which made his sword fly upwards at the first lunge? Had the boy but had time to give that thrust which I had been at so much pains to teach him, it would have been, not himself, but De Marsiac who would be lying here!”

All the while he had been speaking he had been gathering up the two long weapons which lay half-buried amongst the grass. And, after wiping them carefully upon the silk handkerchief in which they had been enveloped, and looking down the blades with a scrutiny that made me shudder, he replaced them in the green-baize bag, which all this while hung suspended on his arm. Then, as if suddenly remembering my presence, he said, looking over his shoulder as he departed:

“You cannot bear witness to much, my friend; but you can say with truth that I had chosen the open space beneath the Three Acacias for this encounter, but De Marsiac declared that the sun was already too powerful up there, and so we drew lots for the choice of this spot or the other. Of course, De Marsiac had the luck—he always has. He knew well enough he could not have ‘slipped’ so as to have thrust the point of his sword through his adversary’s throat up at the Three Acacias: the ground is dry and gravelly there, not soft and slippery as it is in the gorge.”

With this dark and terrible hint, he too disappeared, leaving me face to face with the dead. I could not turn away without giving one last look upon those poor, pale features and that stiffening form; and then I thought it would be cruel and unmanly to leave him thus exposed to the chance of injury from sun, from air—from insects—and summoning all my courage, I approached, and seizing the long silk neckerchief the youth had taken off before the combat, and which was hanging on a branch just above

his head, I stooped down to cover his face from the glare of day. As I did so, a faint buzzing noise smote my ear with as great a shock as though a cannon-ball had been fired close beside me, and the next moment the sensation of some crawling object beneath my fingers renewed the terror and loathing I had felt before! The accursed blue-bottle fly was still hovering there, and, coward that I was, I durst not raise the kerchief to drive it away, but fled without turning to look again, and rushed with desperate haste towards Meudon.

It was well for me that the hour was still so early, or I should have had the whole of Meudon at my heels, as I tore like a madman down the narrow, ill-paved street to the residence of the commissaire. I had anticipated some difficulty in obtaining an audience at that unusual time; but the clerk in waiting received me readily. He scented a crime, and hurried me into the commissaire’s private room to await his honour’s pleasure. The commissaire, in dressing-gown and slippers, listened to my explanation of the business which had brought me there with evident impatience, for my manner was so wild and incoherent that he could scarcely be expected to place confidence in my statement, and when the procès verbal had been made out according to my deposition, he merely nodded his head and said, “We shall see, mon garçon,” and disappeared to his café au lait, the aromatic steam of which pervaded the whole place; but, as he retired, I saw him make a sign to the gendarme, and point to my shoulder. And the latter, with the instinct of his calling, must have understood, for, as he followed the commissaire out, I heard him turn the key in the lock in order to secure me safely. The tumult of my soul can hardly be conceived, as I was left alone in that large, dreary room. I paced to and fro in the restlessness of despair, and as I passed by the looking-glass which hung in front of his honour’s bureau, I could scarcely believe that the wild and haggard countenance I beheld reflected there was the same as that which had greeted my sight in the little mirror opposite the window of my mansarde at early dawn on that very same morning. My hair was all on end, my cheeks of ashy paleness, and my lips parched and cracked. My blouse, all torn and ragged with my forced passage through the brambles, seemed to hang loosely, all out of shape, upon my sunken figure, and—great God! what was that stain upon my sleeve? Ah, yes, I remembered that Bras-de-Fer had clutched

my arm as we slid together down the steep bank into the hollow. This was the precise spot where the fly had alighted, when I had sought to seize him in the coucon; the superstition had found its ample fulfilment there, and this was evidently the testimony which had risen against me to make the gendarme lock me in on a sign from the commissaire.

The minutes seemed hours as I paced the floor. I tried to divert my thoughts by gazing through the iron grating of the window looking into the garden; but close beneath lay a bed of scarlet verbena, and my eyes blinked and my soul sickened at the colour; and over it the bees were hovering with unceasing hum, and my ears could not bear the sound. It made me shudder as if with cold, while my brain seemed on fire.

At length the sound of footsteps slowly approaching gave a turn to my thoughts; the peculiar tread which denotes the bearing of a heavy load, the low murmur of the crowd, and the scuffling of many feet, announced that the errand of death was completed, and the corpse brought into the office yard.

I need not trouble you with the tale of the tedious process of the law, the endless questioning and examination. The legal persecution ended in my entire acquittal of all participation in the death of the young Count de Sorgerac, for such the letters and papers found on the deceased proved him to be, and as his watch and chain, and the rings upon his fingers, remained untouched, I was allowed to go free, with the sole obligation of appearing as witness against the criminals, for whose arrest a warrant was immediately made out. My portfolio and drawings, my colour-box and tin case, were all deposited at the greffe, so that I went forth from the office lightened of the burden which I had began to feel wearisome, but borne down by a strange and ponderous weight ten times more painful to bear, a load which seemed to be crushing me to the very earth. As I passed out from the commissaire's bureau I turned my anxious gaze towards the out-house where I knew that the dead body had been laid. A heavy padlock was on the door, and a gendarme was standing by to prevent the approach of idlers seeking to peep through the crannies of the ill-joined planks; but I knew well enough that neither bolt nor bar could exclude the deadly foe, now endowed by my diseased imagination with a superstitious terror, and I was weak and foolish enough to close my eyes and stop

my ears as I hurried by, lest I should obtain physical evidence of the presence of what I dreaded more than any other living thing upon this earth—the bluebottle fly!

AN HOUR OF AGONY.

HAS the reader ever had a tussle with a Bengal tiger in full vigour and appetite? Has it chanced him to be in a balloon when perforated by Prussian bullets? Has it occurred to him to have been indulging a commendable curiosity in the remoter recesses of a coal-mine, when an explosion suddenly severed the connexion between himself and the world without? These are forms of uneasiness not to be lightly treated of. They shrink into nothing beside that supreme commingling of grief, astonishment, and horror it was my lot to experience on a certain never-to-be-forgotten evening of January, 'forty-nine.

Time's soothing influence has wrought its accustomed effect. All bitterness, all self-reproach, have died gradually away. In place of that mental tumult which, for a long period, attended the remembrance of the incident in question, I now find myself able to narrate with indifference, nay, even with a smile, the circumstance to which, but recently, my most intimate friends durst hardly hazard an allusion.

The Guild of Lumpeters represents one of the most ancient and honoured of London's civic institutions. What they are, *why* they are, I have not the remotest idea. Enough that, on a certain day in November, they are seen in their glory, their banners brighter, their bands brassier, their knights more corpulent, themselves sleeker and more redolent of wealth than any of their prosperous rivals. They have a hall solely, it would seem, for purposes of hospitality. They give dinners of inconceivable succulency and toothsome-ness. They invite mayors, nay, kings, who don't always come, and princes, who generally do, and they also invite *me*. I go, for I like them. All the Lumpeters of my acquaintance are noble, large-hearted men, citizen gentlemen, on whom London, in need of arm or purse, might confidently rely. I think if I were other than what I am, I would be a Lumpeter.

Pretexts were never wanting for a Lumpeter feed. The recovery of the chief city magistrate from a bilious attack, the breaking up of the frost, the birth of a son and heir to the Ban of Croatia, the arrival of a piebald elephant at the gardens of the

Zoological Society, such were among the events I could recal as having suggested feastful rejoicings. But that to which I have now to refer was to be regarded as a private and peculiar gathering, almost, in point of fact, a corporate family-feed, comprising no more than ninety-five guests, selected with discrimination, for the purpose of testing the merits of a new head-cook. Thus it had rather the nature of a grave and dispassionate deliberation than of a dinner, a certain sense of responsibility toning down the exuberant mirth that usually waited on these pleasant assemblies.

There were to be no speeches, no music. The usual loyal toasts, no more. Above all, no ladies. The presence of beauty, chatting in the gallery, might haply distract the attention of the weaker brethren from the great object of the meeting.

The Lumpeters were particular—and a thought conservative—in matters of attire. They themselves, to a man, adhered to the fashion, moribund, but not defunct, of ankle-buttoned pantaloons, figured-silk stockings, buckled shoes, expansive white waistcoats, and the mighty cravat patronised by his late majesty, the fourth George. It was well understood that the adoption of a similar costume on the part of their guests would be interpreted by Lumpeters as the most delicate return that could be offered for their hospitality. I, myself, invariably sported the fancy dress in question.

On the eventful day I have mentioned, it happened that I had been detained at chambers later than usual, and on reaching home had barely time to dress. While doing so, I received an anxious message from a friend who was to have accompanied me to the banquet, but who, being late, and himself a stranger to the guild, begged me to secure for him a seat next my own.

With increased expedition I finished my toilet, and the dining-hall being but five minutes' walk from my residence, I quickly buttoned on a pair of rough overalls, threw on my cloak, and hurried to the spot.

To my astonishment, a crowd, dense and still augmenting, was gathered about the door. It was only through the aid of a friendly policeman that I was enabled to make my way. "What was the matter?" I inquired of Number Nineteen B. The answer, half drowned in the clatter of arriving carriages, sounded something like "furrin swell." "Who?" Number Nineteen forbore to trust his lips with the name; but it were him as kills the wild beastesses out in Afrikey. It was a more intelligent porter who presently announced to me that the

renowned French lion-slayer, the Baron Bobadil de Bête-Fauve, had, at the last moment, accepted an invitation to dine at Lumpeters' Hall.

The character of the assembly had undergone a change. Not only had a little reinforcement of a hundred and twenty guests been hastily invited, but a dense mass of spectators lined the hall, the passages, and the ante-chamber, and even frothed over into the banqueting-room itself, the spacious gallery of which was already filled with ladies, whom the chivalrous guild had found it impossible to dream of excluding.

I was late; but dinner had been deferred half an hour. There would be just time to rush into the room, secure my friend's seat, and then deposit my cloak and overalls in the room devoted to such purposes.

The former matter was quickly arranged, and I was darting back, when I was met by a rush and pressure that almost forced me behind an adjacent screen. The Baron de Bête-Fauve had arrived, and was being triumphantly marched into the hall.

The Baron Bobadil de Bête-Fauve, when visible, proved to be a remarkably small gentleman, with intensely black eyes and moustaches, the latter curling fiercely up almost into the former; but my own situation demanded all my attention. Withdraw I could not. To sit down in that highly-attired society in light brown overalls, such as might be worn by a stableman, was not to be thought of. Ah! an idea. Just within the door, near the wall, but with space to get behind it, stood the large screen against which I had been pressed. Capturing a waiter, I drew him with me into that friendly shelter.

"Here, help, my man. Can't get back. Just let me slip off these confounded—Jurry, now—" I gasped, and tore the buttons loose with lightning speed.

"All right, sir."

The waiter was as quick as I, and scarcely gave me time to disengage the last button, before he caught away the garment, and bundling it up, vanished in the crowd.

"Eh! hillo! stop, you! Good Hea—no—it's impossible! And yet—mercy on us—what shall I do?"

A horrible fact had revealed itself. In making my hurried toilet, I had actually buttoned on my overalls—omitting my black dress-pantaloons!

What was to become of me? Garments, indeed, were there—garments even too ample and obtrusive. I had worn while dressing a pair of wide but shortish trousers once used in a Chinese burlesque, written

by my friend Skelton for the delectation of a private circle, and which, being intended for that occasion only, were adorned with devices grotesque and terror-striking, represented in colours crimson, green, and blue. And these abominable trousers I had brought with me to Lumpeter's Hall!

A chill shot through me as I realised the full extent of the misadventure. I staggered back faintly against the wall, and endeavoured to collect myself. Glancing round the corner of the screen, I observed, with a shudder, that the company were taking their places, while the ladies in the gallery had risen, en masse, and were directing so concentrated a fire of eyes upon the entrance, where the valiant lion-queller had paused to return the salute that greeted him, that to escape had become impossible. I must remain where I was, till able to concert with some compassionate attendant a plan of escape.

There was the settling murmur and buzz, the "Gentlemen, pray silence. For grace!" and the "Stand still, waiters!" in a voice of authority. Grace followed, and the noise of feasting; but the next intelligible words froze my very soul.

"Remove that screen!"

Instinctively I clutched and held it back. There came a violent tug; but there was too much at stake for a feeble defence, and I held on with desperate tenacity.

"Quick, now, with that screen!" said the voice of authority. "What's the matter?"

"There's a gent, be'ind, a'-olding of it back," said some officious booby.

"Here - you!" I gasped. "Five shillings! Ten! Twenty! Five pounds! Fetch—brown overalls! Forgot trou—Let the screen alone, can't ye?"

"Bless my 'cart, sir! 'Ere *is* a go!" said a waiter, grinning, but compassionate, for he had recognised me, even thus.

"Take that thing out of the way!" roared the voice of authority.

"Must do it, sir," explained the waiter. "The heatables can't come by. Stop! There's a vacant seat. Taint three steps off."

"That's mine," I groaned.

"'Ow lucky! Now just you slip into it as I shifts the screen, so's to purtect you. Tuck the table-kiver well into your weskit, and nobody'll be the wiser. One, two, three. Hoff you go!"

Off it was necessary to go, for he caught away my defences, but extended the folding arms of the screen, so as nearly to touch the vacant seat. In that instant, how I hardly knew, I found myself fairly

seated at the board, the friend who should have accompanied me at my side.

"You take it coolly, old fellow," remarked the latter. "I fancied that at these dinners punctuality——"

"I take it coolly, *very* coolly," I replied. "And it is for your sake I am doing so. May I ask you to spare me as much adjacent table-cloth as is compatible with your personal convenience?"

"Table-cloth! Assuredly. But why?"

"There are reasons, hidden reasons. But of that hereafter. A glass of wine?"

"My friend is agitated. His manly fingers quiver. Something is amiss with Charteris," remarked my companion, in the sepulchral tone he is given to use when chaffing those he loves.

Dicky Skelton, who never, so far as it is ascertained, had a relative in the world, dresses always in the deepest mourning. He never laughs, outwardly. He is mirth itself, within. He has written burlesques by the score. To Skelton is due the evisceration of words, that have baffled the skill of the most accomplished tormentors of the English language.

"My friend, confide in me," continued Dick, smacking his lips, for the Lumpeter Burgundy is not to be tasted every day. "You are ill at ease."

"At the knees. A trifle."

"To remember one's troubles in such a scene is weak."

"To forget one's trousers is madness," I whispered, with clenched teeth, in his ear.

"One's——!" ejaculated Skelton, faintly, as he turned upon me a countenance naturally wan and lengthy, but now whitened and elongated with real alarm. "You—don't mean—— Do I distinctly understand——?"

"You understand my reason for requiring as large a portion of the table-cloth as you can conveniently spare."

"Now this is very noteworthy, yes, it is really curious," remarked Mr. Skelton, with more interest than sympathy. "I do not remember having ever met with a precisely similar situation. A man may, indeed, forget an essential garment. The mind cannot always be dwelling on these outward things. But has he no friend? Wife, servant, grandmother? Is there no hand to bar his exit, no tongue to say, 'My dear, my very dear sir, return, reflect. Consult, if not prevailing fashions, at least that warmth and comfort as needful to man as his daily food?' Did none do this?"

I shook my head, and briefly recounted the cause and manner of my misfortune.

My friend gazed at me sorrowfully:

"So fair above!" he murmured. "So—well, so singular below! Who now, in this brilliant assembly—graced, as I perceive, with the presence of many beautiful (and giggling) women—would imagine that you, sitting here so well got up, radiant with artificial mirth, are a type of Milton's Sin?"

I replied, curtly, that I accepted the situation, as he was pleased to term it, with the calmness that seemed expedient, and that having done all that man could do, I awaited the decrees of fate, and the arrival of the waiter, to whom I had offered a sovereign to smuggle in my overalls, at the first opportune moment.

"Awfully lucky for you, my boy, there's to be no speech-making!" continued Skelton. "We would have had you on your defenceless legs in no time."

"Have you seen the toast-list, gentlemen?" asked a portly member of the guild, on my left, as he politely offered a card.

There was a catalogue of at least twenty toasts, with names appended as proposers; and, as proposing that of the guest of the evening, the Baron de Bête-Fauve, "Mr. Reginald Charteris!"

At the same moment a note was placed in my hand. It was from the chairman.

"Oblige us. We know your ready eloquence. Baron struck with your face and manner. Wishes to hear you speak. Touch up the lions."

Snatching out my pencil-case I wrote: "Throat impracticable. Uvula cut off this morning. Should create more astonishment than interest if forced upon my legs."

I breathed. That peril was averted. My spirits rose as the merry feast proceeded, and I began to see more distinctly the humorous side of my little misadventure. The atmosphere was warm and pleasant. Why, I had been present at many a dinner in the north where men dined, from preference, without their—that is, in kilts. True, I had not exactly a kilt; but, even were I compelled to stand forth from my present retirement, the exhibition of knee, the publication of calf, would be no greater than is legally sanctioned within five hundred miles of this spot.

Ha! a sensation. "Pray silence," &c. Grace. "Non nobis." Then the usual loyal toasts, and we drank prosperity to several collateral branches of the reigning house (the Lumpeters were nothing if not loyal), before we arrived at the great toast of the evening—the Baron de Bête-Fauve. This was given by the chairman himself; and,

with the baron's reply (in French), and counter-proposition of the health of the ladies, was received with the greatest enthusiasm.

The excitement was just settling down, when——

"Hallo!" exclaimed Skelton, "what's up, now? Is any one expected, I wonder? They are putting a big velvet chair next to Bête-Fauve. It must be a swell. Can the Prince of——"

"So long as it is not intended for my humble person," I replied, with an easy smile, "I am perfectly——"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Charteris," said the voice of the head-steward, who, followed by two attendant waiters, had approached us unobserved. "The chair, sir, presents his compliments, and begs you will do him and the Baron de Bête-Fauve the favour to occupy the seat that has been placed for you between them."

My heart stood still. My hair rose. A chill of horror shot through me.

"The baron, sir, speaks no English, and though him and the chair has been hard at it all dinner, neither of 'em has understood a word," said the steward, confidentially. "The chair, sir, and the company generally," added Mr. Feastful, with poetic exaggeration, "would hail with pleasure the spectacle of your introduction to the baron."

"The baron be——" I know not what I was about to say. My voice faltered. I had caught a glimpse of the fair occupants of the gallery, leaning over the balustrade in their eagerness to examine the favoured individual for whom the chair of state had been so ostentatiously prepared, and a vision of myself marching up the hall, clad in my abominable burlesque Chinese trousers, the mark of every eye, almost made me reel in my chair.

I shuddered, strove to speak, conceived a wild thought of diving under the table, when, whish! with a lurid, fitful swirl, out went the enormous lustre, with all the minor lights following suit. We were in total darkness.

I will not describe the confusion that succeeded, the screams of laughter from the gallery, the scramble and the crash below. Torches gleamed in the doorways almost before we knew what had happened, and the accident that had occasioned the sudden extinction of our light was remedied within a few minutes.

But, when order was restored, one chair stood vacant at that hospitable board! Whether its occupant had been trampled

under foot in the disorder, or had vanished with the light, was never known. My private opinion is that, while anxious inquiries were being made in the Lumpeters' Hall, the missing gentleman was warming his legs at his domestic hearth, sipping his grog, and smiling at the peril he had so narrowly escaped.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER V. THE NEXT DAY.

MR. DRAGE, smoking a sedative pipe in the rectory garden after breakfast the next morning, pondering over his strange interview with Philip Vane, and wondering when and how he should hear of its result, was startled from his reverie by the clanging of the bell, and looking up saw Mrs. Pickering at the gate. This visit was not unexpected, nor, truth to tell, had it been contemplated without alarm. The rector felt tolerably certain that Mrs. Pickering would come to tell him how matters had progressed at Wheatercroft, during the stay of the strangers from London; but it was by no means certain that he himself might not have been seen in colloquy with Vane by some of the servants on the premises, or even by the housekeeper herself, and that the reason for and the result of that colloquy might be demanded of him. To be sure, he argued with himself, he had informed Mrs. Pickering of his determination of some time or other seeking an interview with her husband on her behalf, and had obtained her consent, however unwilling it was given; but he confessed to himself that Mrs. Pickering had looked upon his declared intention of seeking that interview as vague and remote, and would probably resent his having availed himself of the first opportunity which presented itself without further communication with her on the subject.

There, however, she was at the garden gate, and, whatever happened, she must not be kept waiting. So Mr. Drage hurried down the path and gave her admittance, bidding her good morning, with that strange mixture of earnestness and nervousness which always characterised his communications with Mrs. Pickering.

"Well, now tell me about your guests," said he, after the ordinary salutation. "They arrived according to promise. They stayed with you, and—"

"And are gone," said Madge. They went off by the express this morning, to my intense relief; for I felt bound, fettered, and as though I could scarcely breathe, while they were in the house."

"You carried out your intention of asking Sir Geoffry to allow you to keep your room?"

"Yes; he accorded it at once, and nothing could have worked better. Mr. Vane and his friend were in the house nearly four-and-twenty hours, and during the whole of that time they neither of them caught sight of me."

"The other man might have seen you without any danger to yourself, I suppose?"

"I am not so sure of that. This Mr. Delabole is a man who followed us one day from the theatre at Wexeter, and seemed to take particular notice of us. By the way, what could have brought him to Wexeter at that time, I wonder? It was certainly the same man; I recognised his figure."

"Indeed! Then, though unseen yourself, you managed to see them?"

"Scarcely to see them. Some time after dinner, when it was quite dusk, they went into the garden to smoke, and strolled up and down the little side path leading to the stables, which is immediately under my window. My attention was attracted to them by hearing Philip's well-remembered short sarcastic laugh. Then I peered out cautiously once or twice, and perceived them moving about in the gloom. There was not light enough for me to see their features, but I recognised the other man's square, thick-set figure, and Philip's swinging walk."

"You heard Mr. Vane laugh?" asked the rector, somewhat anxiously. "He must have been amused; I conclude things must have been going well."

"It was by no means that kind of laugh," replied Madge, "but one which I have heard too often not to recognise its meaning—short, hard, and sarcastic. Besides, though I could not distinguish the words they uttered, I could hear the tone in which they spoke, and my impression was that they were using anything but pleasant language to each other."

"That looks as though they had not been able to carry through the business which brought them down here," said the rector.

"I do not fancy matters went quite as smoothly as they anticipated," said Madge. "I spoke to Sir Geoffry just before coming out. He told me he had informed those gentlemen that he was not prepared to give

them a final and decisive answer at once, but that he would write to them in the course of a few days."

"Deliberation on such a matter in a man of Sir Geoffry's temperament does not argue well for the success of those speculating gentry," said the rector. "One would scarcely imagine that a man by nature so impulsive would be inclined to deliberate over even matters of business."

"I think that in this instance, at all events, the result of his deliberations will be to prohibit his friend from embarking in the project which Mr. Vane and his companion came here to advocate," said Madge. "I cannot tell you by what means, but a curious piece of information relative to this very affair has fallen into my hands. I shall lay it before Sir Geoffry prior to his writing his decision, and I have no doubt of the way in which it will influence him."

"I hope there is no chance of—of your husband hearing of the part which you propose to take in this matter?" said the rector, nervously.

"Not the least chance in the world, I should imagine," said Madge. "But suppose he were to hear of it, what then?"

"It might induce him to be more bitter against you."

"Nothing could render him more bitter against me than the knowledge—if he ever acquired it—that I had explained to his future wife the impossibility of his legal marriage with her."

"No, but—suppose he should give up that project and repent, the knowledge of this interference on your part might aggravate him against you, and prevent his doing the justice which he otherwise would."

"Give up that project and repent! Philip Vane repenting and doing justice! My dear Mr. Drage, what can you be thinking of? You have only heard of Mr. Vane through me; and either my descriptive or your appreciative powers must be poor indeed, if you could think that such a man could be led to give up any project from which he is to derive great benefit and comfort. However, we need not discuss this matter any further; there cannot be the slightest implied connexion between me and the answer which Sir Geoffry will send on this matter of business. As Mr. Vane has passed twenty-four hours under the same roof with me in complete ignorance of my proximity, he cannot imagine me to be in collusion with his opponent; and even if Mrs. Bendixen were to tell him of my visit to her, she could not give him any clue to my abode."

Mr. Drage said no more. He felt quite certain that if Philip Vane were to hear of his wife's interference in his business project, all hopes of the repentance and reformation which his last words seemed to convey were at an end. And Mr. Drage believed in the possibility of his arguments having produced a salutary effect. "The man's manner was so real," he said to himself. "He was evidently touched."

Meanwhile Madge, making the best of her way home, was wondering what the rector could have meant by his allusion to the possibility of Philip Vane's being induced, by any means other than threatened exposure, to give up the project on which his heart was fixed. Although Mr. Drage had talked vaguely about seeking an interview in which he would warn Philip of the iniquity of the course he was pursuing, and of the danger which awaited him if he persisted in it, Madge had no notion that the quiet, nervous invalid would have had the courage to carry his plan into effect. What he had said arose from that simplicity and want of knowledge of the world, which she had often remarked in him. Madge did not rightly estimate the depth of the mine of love in that honest heart. Since the time when she had told him of the impossibility of her ever being more to him than a friend, the rector had carefully abstained from any exhibition of his feeling for her, and she imagined that it had died away, or at least had given place to that merely brotherly regard which she was able and willing to accept.

When she reached Wheatercroft she found Sir Geoffry engaged in his favourite occupation of superintending the gardeners, and driving them to desperation by the conflicting suggestions which he made, and impossible orders which he desired carried out. The old general looked up as she approached, and at once advanced to meet her.

"Good morning, Mrs. Pickering," he said. "You were early astir this morning. I went to your room after breakfast, but found you already flown. So I came out here to give a few directions as to the manner in which I wish this compound laid out by next summer. There is nothing which refreshes me so much after muddling my head with complicated details of business, as to undertake a little landscape gardening, in which, I flatter myself, I have excellent taste."

Madge, to whom the gardeners were constantly appealing when hopelessly involved by their master's contradictory in-

structions, thought it better not to touch upon the latter portion of this speech, so she said: "And your business matters are now, I trust, satisfactorily disposed of, Sir Geoffry?"

"I hope so—I think so. I have pretty well made up my mind upon the course which I shall recommend to Mr. Irving, though I have not written either to him or to those gentlemen who have just left us."

"And that course is——?"

"To decline to have anything to do with the affair."

"I am glad of that," said Madge, earnestly, "I am very glad of that!"

"Indeed!" said the old general, looking at her knowingly. "Is your knowledge of the Terra del Fuegos Mining Company somewhat greater than that merely obtainable from my casual mention of it, or from reading out to me the variation in its shares as reported in the City article?"

"My knowledge of the Company is absolutely nil," said Madge, quietly, "but I am glad to find that you are going to dissuade your friend from entering what might prove at least a questionable speculation. Mr. Irving is a very rich man, I have heard you say, and no longer a young one. It is better in his old age that he should keep his riches—and his friends."

"Very neatly put, Mrs. Pickering," said Sir Geoffry, with a laugh, "though I do not think Alec Irving would be likely to break with me, even though he lost money by following my advice. Our intimacy is of too long standing, and my recommendations hitherto have proved too successful for him to dream of that. However, in this matter there was a very large sum of money involved, and, as you say, it is better for him to keep what he has. There is nothing that one grows so fond of as wealth; a poorer man would stand the loss with far more equanimity."

"Your recent guests will not be pleased at your decision," said Madge, watching him attentively.

"Then they must be displeased, my dear Mrs. Pickering," said the general. "I have treated them with every courtesy and given them all they wanted, except my friend's money. And at one time, by Jove, they were very nearly getting that."

"They pleaded their cause well, then?"

"They did, indeed. So well, that if I had not happily induced them to let me have the papers last night—I sat up reading them until daybreak, and am horribly fatigued in consequence—they would probably have succeeded in inducing me to

recommend their venture to Irving's consideration. They are two remarkably clever fellows; the younger man especially Mr. Vane argued with immense apparent earnestness, and was wonderfully ready with his replies to all my objections."

"And you think they will accept your letter as a final decision?"

"I do not say that! The stake is too large for them to give up all hope of winning it without a further effort. I should not be surprised if one of them, probably Mr. Vane, were to come down here again with more persuasive talk and more promising documents; but it will be useless, my mind is made up."

"He surely would not come without apprising you?" asked Madge, in agitation.

"And even were he to do so," said the general, with a smile, "your arrangements for the domestic comforts of this house are always so complete, my dear Mrs. Pickering, that we could risk being taken un-awares."

"Oh, yes of course, everything could be made ready for a visitor in a very few moments. It was scarcely with that idea that I asked. However," added Madge, disjunctedly, "that will do when Mr. Vane arrives. Now, if you do not require me further, Sir Geoffry, I have my duties to attend to."

"Very strange woman that," muttered the old general. "What has upset her, I wonder! She can't have been speculating with her savings, and investing in this mine? Of course not. It must be that she did not like being taken aback, and wanted everything proper and orderly by any unexpected arrival. She's not without pride either, as she proved by begging to be allowed to keep out of sight during the time of those fellows' visit. Didn't like to be recognised as the housekeeper, I suppose. Strange that, and unlike her way in general. But all women are strange, I have noticed, and the less one has to do with them the better."

The housekeeping duties which had formed Madge's excuse for quitting the general did not immediately engross her attention. She went straight to her sitting-room in anything but a peaceful frame of mind, and threw herself into a chair to cogitate over the announcement which had been just made to her. From what Sir Geoffry had said, there was a chance that on any day, without warning, Philip Vane might come down to Wheatcroft to pass another twenty-four hours as a guest be-

neath its roof. In that case she would have no opportunity of taking the precaution to absent herself, or to secure herself against all chances of being accidentally brought into his presence. And there was every probability of their meeting face to face, and meeting under circumstances which would preclude any explanation on her part of how she happened to be there. She had noticed that Sir Geoffry had been scanning her curiously during the whole of their recent conversation, and she feared that if she were again to request permission to remain in seclusion during the visitors' stay, his evident suspicion might take some more definite shape. She must for the present, she thought, leave her actions to be decided by the circumstances as they arose. Her tact, her luck, let it be called what it might, had never deserted her yet, and she would trust to its promptings on the emergency.

As she rose from her seat, she was surprised at the sight of a letter lying on the table. She had been away from the house at the time of the postman's arrival, and on her first return to her room her mind had been too much occupied to allow her to think of anything but the subject which immediately engrossed her attention.

The letter was from Rose. Madge recognised that at once by its shape and size, though on taking it up she noticed that the handwriting, usually so round and clerkly, was tremulous and hurried. The word "immediate," twice underscored, was also on the superscription, so that Madge, alarmed, hurriedly broke open the envelope, and fearing that her sister was ill or unhappy, hurried through the contents. They were as follows :

DEAREST MADGE,—I don't mind telling you that I was a good deal annoyed when I received your answer to my last, saying that you could not either meet me at some nice seaside place as I proposed, where we might spend my holiday together, or that you would not allow me to come down to Springside and see as much of you as you could manage. I was annoyed, dear, because I have been for ever such a time longing to be with you, and to talk to you, and because it seemed so hard that you should merely tell me "you could not," and "you could not," without going into any explanation. I know you think that my stock of common sense is not very large, and I myself am ready to admit the fact, only I don't like having it pointed out to me quite so plainly.

However, I know that everything you do always somehow turns out for the best, and so it happened in this instance. If I had come away from London, as I proposed to do, I might not have heard something—two things really—which may be of the very greatest importance to me—I mean to us. When I say "us," of course you will understand, from what I wrote to you in my last letter, that I mean to Gerald and myself! Oh, Madge! I can scarcely tell you the extraordinary things that have happened, the wonderful discovery which I have made. I don't know exactly how to begin to tell it; I know that properly I ought to keep my great secret for the last, but then, perhaps, you wouldn't have patience to read so far, so that I had better blurt it out at once.

Well, then, you must know that the old gentleman in whose house you are living, your master I suppose I must call him—don't be annoyed, Madge, you know I wouldn't pain you, but I am so bad at explaining these things—Sir Geoffry Heriot, that is the best way to put it, is Gerald's father. Fancy that, Madge; fancy your living in the same house with that old man, seeing him every day, ordering his dinner, and that kind of thing, and not having the least idea that he was Gerald's father. He seems to be a very horrid old person, with a most abominable temper. Not that Gerald will allow this for a moment, but I am sure it must be so from what he tells me about him. You know, Madge, we always fancied at Wexeter that Gerald was a gentleman's son, and that he had run away from home, and this appears to be the case. When he was quite a lad, just before he came to old Dobson's theatre, he had a terrible quarrel with his father, who treated him most shamefully, and turned him out of the house. I do not quite understand what the quarrel was about, but I am certain Gerald was in the right.

The one thing which I remember in this story is, that Sir Geoffry had quarrelled with his wife as well as his son, and was infuriated against Gerald because he took his mother's part. It seems that Sir Geoffry, in early life, brought some terrible accusation against his wife, an accusation which Gerald, when he heard of it, imagined to be false, and was determined to disprove. He intended to devote all his time to solving this mystery, but he had his living to get, poor fellow! He had scarcely any leisure when at Wexeter, and what he had, he said, he employed in a different way. Why did Gerald blush

when he said that, Madge? I don't think he was in love with me when we were in Miss Cave's lodgings; but he did blush, and looked quite strange when he mentioned it.

However, he did find it out; and now comes the extraordinary part of the story. He discovered that his father had been deceived, and had acted with the greatest injustice towards his mother; and in his old impulsive way, which I dare say you will recollect, Madge, he determined on starting off at once to see Sir Geoffry, and to lay before him the facts which he had learned. And he went! Without saying a word to me he hurried off to Springside, and actually made his way to Wheatercroft. Fancy that, Madge! Fancy Gerald being actually in the same house with you, and neither of you knowing anything about it. Of course I didn't then know who his father was; he only took me into his confidence on his return, or I should have told him about your being there.

It seems to have been a dreadful business, Madge. Sir Geoffry flew into a towering passion directly he saw him. Would not listen to a word he had to say, and actually ordered the servant to turn him out of the house. It seems too dreadful to think of, after all Gerald's patience and suffering, to receive such cruel treatment from his own father! It was an awful shock to him. Since his return he seems quite a changed man. He has lost all that fire and energy which I dare say you will remember as characteristic of him, and does nothing but brood over the wrongs he has received. More keenly than anything he seems to feel the injustice which Sir Geoffry does him in suspecting that he had merely invented the discovery of his mother's innocence as a means to restore himself to his old position and his father's favour. If Sir Geoffry could only be brought to acknowledge how wrong that suspicion is, I am sure that half Gerald's misery would disappear.

And Sir Geoffry must be brought to acknowledge it, and a reconciliation must be effected between father and son, and, what is more, all this must be done by you, Madge! Yes, by you! I have not told Gerald one word about your being at Wheatercroft; I thought it better not. So that whatever is done will come upon him as a surprise. I will not attempt for an instant to suggest what you should

do. Your clear head and common sense are sure to prompt the proper course, but the result must be, Sir Geoffry's acceptance of his wife's innocence, and Gerald's restoration to his home.

You can do this, Madge, and I know you will! You would have exerted yourself in any case, but you will exert yourself more than ever now, for one reason which I have kept till the last. I told you that I was madly in love with Gerald, but that he did not make love to me. Now, Madge, he has asked me to be his wife. He first spoke to me before that dreadful visit to Wheatercroft. Since his return he has asked me again. He wishes us to be married, he said, and to commence our new life in some foreign country. But I would not have him go away while matters remain as they are between him and his father. Now you see the importance of the task I have intrusted to you, and you will throw your whole heart into it, I know.

Your loving
ROSE.

A pang shot through Madge's heart as she read the concluding lines of this letter.

"Gerald about to be married—and to Rose," she said, dreamily, letting the letter drop from her hand. Then rose up before her mental vision the old crescent at Wexeter, round which she and Gerald Hardinge had walked on that well-remembered night. His words rung again in her ears. "You know how I love and worship you, my darling! How, since the first hour I saw you, I have been your slave, never happy but when near you, and having no other thought but of and for you."

And now he was going to be married to Rose! Madge bent her head upon her breast, and her muttered words, "I suppose it is all for the best," sounded very hopelessly.

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INDEX.

	PAGE		PAGE
THE LAMP AND ITS SLAVES	1	THE HEAVENLY TWINS	31
IN THE CONFESSIONAL	7	THE IRON CAGE	36
THE SIGNOR JOHN	14	FACE TO FACE	42
THE LAST TENANTS OF HANGMAN'S HOUSE	24	THE LAMP'S TIDINGS	48

THE LAMP AND ITS SLAVES.

AFTER depositing one passenger, the train went writhing out of the station; the serpentine motion and the red lamp together suggesting the idea of an enormous glowworm. The man who had alighted, who had been awakened from a doze, and was still half asleep, stood staring after it until the porter, the one other living being in the place, touched him on the arm and asked him for his ticket.

"Here it is," said the passenger, producing it. "Now where is the man?"

"What man?" asked the porter, gruffly, raising his lantern to get a better view of the stranger, and eyeing him suspiciously.

The light fell upon a tall, middle-aged man, wrapped from head to foot in a thick great-coat, and carrying a travelling-rug in one hand and a bag in the other.

"The man from Meneage," he said, shortly. "I telegraphed this morning to Mr. Stacey that I was coming down by this train, and I expected he would have sent a trap to meet me."

"Oh, you are Mr. Cameron, then?" said the porter. "Telegraph came all right, sir, but there weren't nobody to take it up to Squire Stacey; and it's plain you're strange to these parts, or you wouldn't talk about traps coming from Meneage this time of year. River's out now, sir, and there's no way of getting to Meneage but by boat."

"Do you mean to say my message didn't go to Mr. Stacey?"

"Not it," said the porter, quietly. "It's locked up in station-master's desk, that's where that is! Most of the Bridgefoot men have gone out in the fishing-smacks, and there's only two boatmen left in the

place, and they were both away time your message arrived."

"But I must get to Meneage to-night," said Mr. Cameron, "if I row myself there!"

"No call for you to do that, sir," said the porter; "one of the boatmen's sure to be back by this time, and he won't mind the job if he's well paid for it, though it's rather a roughish night. We will go and try and find old Bowes. Give me your bag, sir, and come along a me."

They crossed the line, and went out into an open road, bordered on either side by pretty villas, summer residences of the rich Avonmouth tradesmen. From the eminence on which they stood they saw, climbing the cliff beneath them, the little white-washed cottages of the fishing-village perched in clumps of two and three, one above the other, until they were finally intermingled with the stone houses and the slated roofs of the business portion of the town. Above their heads were traceable the vast yet delicate proportions of that great triumph of engineering skill, the bridge from which the village takes its name, while the fitful gleams of moonlight, which from time to time struggled through the dark bank of clouds, showed the dull outline of some old three-deckers, notable ships in their day, but long since abandoned to the dry-rot and the rats.

"We are getting near the place now, sir," said the porter, as they wound down what was little better than a narrow stone ladder between the houses. "This is where our fishing people mostly live."

"So my nose informs me," said Mr. Cameron, dryly.

The porter looked at him and grinned.

"Tell 'ee that's nothing to Penzance fish-trucks in herring or pilchard season; 'tain't nice, perhaps, but it's main wholesome, I reckon, though some of 'em seems to think that 'tis better to keep the taste well washed out of their mouths. Tom Bowes is one of that sort; and here we are at his place. Hallo, Tom! Tom Bowes! rouse 'un out, Tom; here's a gentleman wants yer."

The porter stopped before a low, dingy hovel, with a thatched roof, and a tiny window, the little light procurable from which was, however, obscured by a thick glass bottle of dirty, clumsy-looking sweetmeats, and a couple of large-bowled clay pipes with crossed stems. As the man raised his lantern to the door, the light fell upon a half-effaced inscription setting forth that the shop owner was duly licensed to sell groceries, &c. "Ah, that was in his wife's lifetime, sir," said the porter, pointing to the words. "She were a hard-working woman, always trying to keep him straight, but since her death, whatever time Tom's not in the boat, he's down at the Trawling Net, or asleep here."

"Perhaps he's at the Trawling Net, now?" said Mr. Cameron. "He don't appear to hear us."

"Trawling Net's shut long since," said the porter. "I'll soon rouse 'un out, I tell 'ee. Do 'ee just kick at door while I shout, sir!"

After a series of combined kicks and roars, the door opened, and Mr. Bowes stood before them, dressed in thick trousers and a frowsy yellow shirt. He was a heavily-built, ill-looking man of about fifty, with his coarse sandy hair brought down after the old sailor fashion in a curl or love-lock on either side of his broad square forehead, with a mass of tangled beard and whiskers, and with a shifty, furtive glance in the small grey eyes which were deeply sunken in his head.

"What's this!" he cried, in a dull thick voice, stepping a pace back and raising his hand to shade his face from the glare of the porter's lamp. "What's this!" he repeated, lurching heavily forward and clinging to the door for support.

"A job, Tom, that's what this is!" said the porter. "A job!"

"Job be ——" said Mr. Bowes, savagely. "Go and ring thy old bell at station, and leave I to sleep."

"Gentleman wants to go to Meneage, Tom."

"What's he to do to Meneage?" asked Bowes. "'Tain't the colonel or Mr. Arthur. He isn't to home to Meneage."

"Never you mind what I want at Meneage, my man," said Mr. Cameron, stepping forward; "I want you to take me there, and I will pay you well."

"So yer need," said Bowes, sullenly; "a man should be well paid to pull up to Meneage at such a time a night, and in such weather."

"Weather isn't so bad for November," said the porter.

"It'll be bad enough for December and February shuttled up together, before morning, Harry," said Bowes, looking up at the sky. "There will be a fine fight 'twixt wind and rain in an hour's time."

"Then the sooner we're off the better," said Mr. Cameron. "Good-night, my friend," he added, turning to the porter, "and thanks for the trouble you have taken."

The porter knuckled his forehead as he pocketed his gratuity, and took advantage of Bowes's momentary absence to whisper, pointing to the inside of the cottage, "Don't fear 'un, sir."

"Fear!" echoed Mr. Cameron.

"I mean don't mind 'un; he's a little heavy wi' liquor now, and when so, he's apt to be foul-mouthed and blows a little about himself and so on. He's the best boatman in Bridgefoot, and drunk or sober never met with an accident yet."

"Let's trust his usual luck will not forsake him to-night," said Mr. Cameron. "Here he is. Now again, good-night."

And the porter touched his cap and started off, as Bowes reappeared, bearing on his shoulder a pair of sculls and sprit and sail. He had put on the usual fisherman's knitted blue jersey, and carried a yellow oil-skin coat over his arm.

Bowes locked the door behind him, put the key in his pocket, and beckoning Mr. Cameron to follow him, strode down the steps toward the pier. The steamers which take the summer tourists such pleasant excursions had long since been laid up in dock; and in the little creek lying under the lee of the old pier, and sheltered thereby from wind and tide, which in the season is filled with gaily painted craft, were only two boats, each rough, strong, and serviceable. Into one of these boats Bowes threw the gear with which he was laden, and then lowered himself; loosened the rope from the ring which held the boat to the pier side, and, hand over hand, gradually worked her along until she reached the bottom of the small flight of steps.

"Down here," growled Bowes, looking up at his companion; "mind they steps; they be soaked slippery with the slime and

washing of the tide. That's it—go aft now. You're pretty used to this kind of thing I reckon," he added, as Mr. Cameron, passing him lightly, picked up the rudder from the bottom of the boat, and bending with it over the stern, shipped it easily:

"Yes," said Mr. Cameron, with a short laugh, "I have been in a boat before."

"So have I," said Bowes, pulling the boat's head round, and settling down to his work. "I served on board the Vectis at the China war."

"Ah, I remember the Vectis," said Mr. Cameron. "She was commissioned at Avonmouth, and was full of Bridgefoot men."

"I'm no Bridgefoot man."

"Indeed," said Mr. Cameron, who had wrapped himself in his rug, and lit his pipe. "Where do you hail from then?"

"From Tremadoc, the other side of Vryan's Head."

"The deuce you do. I know it well."

"Ah, so does him you're going to visit, Mr. Arthur Stacey, him as lives up in the house there. He's going to be married he is."

"How do you know that?"

"Same way as any other fool; there's no one as hasn't heard that Mr. Arthur's going to be married to Miss Tregenna. It's to be a grand wedding they say; the old squire's mad with joy, and the colonel's coming down from London—keep her starboard, sir. Ha, ha! fancy Mr. Arthur going to be married!"

"It seems to afford you a great deal of amusement," said Mr. Cameron.

"It du, it du, there is nothing I've heard of for many a year I reckon as has made me laugh so much—now, sir, port your helm sharp, and run her on to that spit."

Two minutes after, the boat had run aground, and Bowes had leaped out and was holding her by the painter.

"Safe so far," said Mr. Cameron, as he stood on the strand.

"Ay, so far," said Bowes, grimly.

"There's your money, my man," said Mr. Cameron. "If you make her fast to that stake she'll be safe enough, and you can walk up with me to the house and have a drink of cider, or what you like."

"Not I," said Bowes, shoving the boat off, and springing into her as she floated; "not a bite nor a sup would I take under Arthur Stacey's roof. I'd deserve to be choked if I did."

"As you please," said Cameron. "You're a queer customer, Mr. Bowes."

"May be," returned Bowes, "may be

Arthur Stacey'll find that out before long. Wish him luck from me on his marriage, ha, ha!" And he bent himself to his sculls and went sweeping away with the tide.

Mr. Cameron looked after him for a moment, then shrugged his shoulders, and made the best of his way to the white wicket-gate he saw before him. Passing through it, he found himself on a narrow gravel-path, which led into the broad carriage sweep before the hall-door. Lights were gleaming here and there in the house, and a vigorous application to the bell speedily produced a servant, who told Mr. Cameron the squire had retired, but that Mr. Arthur was still up. The next moment Arthur Stacey appeared in the hall and cordially welcomed the visitor.

"You didn't expect me, Arthur?" said Cameron, when the library door had closed behind them. "I telegraphed this morning that I was coming, but heard at Bridgefoot that the message could not be delivered. I wanted to have a few days' quiet with you before the other wedding guests arrived, and——"

"Thank God you are come, no matter what brought you," said Arthur Stacey. "You are the one man in the world whom I wish to see. I should have telegraphed to you to come to-morrow, if, indeed, I had not run up to London to you."

"What on earth's the matter, man? You seem strangely moved."

"Moved," echoed Stacey, "I have had enough to move me. Stewart," he added, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, "I have heard fearful news this afternoon."

"News," cried Stewart Cameron. "What news?"

"The most horrible, the most fatal. Ellen Pollard is alive!"

"Good Heavens," cried Cameron. "Your wife?"

"Yes," groaned Stacey, "my miserable wife."

"My poor dear Arthur. Why it seems ages since she—since she left England."

"It is ten years ago since she ran away from me with a man of her own class to America. It is eight years ago since I received what I imagined to be incontrovertible proof of her death."

"In what shape came the news which you heard to-day?"

"In the form of a letter, written in the scrawl I remember so well, and signed 'Ellen Stacey.' The writer said she had heard of my intended marriage, and——"

"And forbade it?"

"No; then I might have doubted its

authenticity. What it did say was so painfully like her real self as to make me tremble. It had suited her purpose, she said, to make me believe that she was dead. She would remain dead, she said, to me and to the world, on the receipt of a thousand pounds; if I failed to send her that sum by the next mail, to a given address in New York, she would return to England and proclaim herself."

"Was there anything else in the letter?"

"Nothing but some horrible ribaldry about Miss Tregenna and her family."

"Miss Tregenna and her family? How could Ellen have learned any particulars of them? Was she acquainted with any one in these parts?"

"Only with one man; a fellow who is now a boatman in Bridgefoot."

"The man who brought me here to-night, Bowes?"

"The same. He came from Tremadoc; the place where I first met her when I went to read with the rector, and he was a sort of lover of hers before she flew at higher game."

Then Stewart Cameron remembered how Bowes had made merry over Arthur Stacey's impending marriage; but remembering it, he held his peace.

"Oh, Stewart," cried Arthur, in an agony of grief, "not even to you until now have I told what I suffered through that fatal folly! It was bad enough to have to conceal the fact of my marriage from the old people at home, to have to pass my time with a woman who was susceptible of no softness, capable of no improvement, careless of the sacrifice which I had made for her, thinking but of her own self, and of how much could be made out of the silly boy who had succumbed to her temptation. But when I came to see her under the influence of drink, smuggled into the house and taken in secret, holding me up to the derision of those chosen friends whom I had foolishly permitted her to retain, scoffing at my parents and at all that was good and true, I felt that my burden was almost insupportable. She relieved me of it at last by her flight. Then came the news of her death, and I thought I might find some solace for my wasted life by a suitable marriage. But years went by and I saw no one I could care for until, within the last few months, I met Maud Tregenna—Maud Tregenna, who is now lost to me for ever!"

"Nonsense," said Cameron, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, "I never saw the Arthur Stacey of old days throw

up the sponge, nor shall he do so now! This matter must he thoroughly sifted!"

"Sifted," echoed Stacey, bitterly. "Where, and by whom?"

"In America, and by me! In my rambling, special-correspondent life, I have seen men and cities, as you know, and there are few places, out of London, with which I am better acquainted than New York. Fifth Avenue drawing-room, lager beer saloons, Bowery boys, bar-keepers, I know them all. This is Wednesday, I can get through by way of Bristol, and arrive in Liverpool on Friday, in good time to sail by the Cunard boat on Saturday morning."

"But Maud—Miss Tregenna. What am I to say to her?"

"Leave that to me. I'll have all our plan of action cut and dried and detailed by to-morrow morning; and now, old man, give me some supper, and let me get to bed, for I am hungry and tired, and shall want a long sleep to clear my brain for thinking out what we have to do."

However much Stewart Cameron might have wanted a long sleep, he certainly did not get it; for Arthur Stacey heard him walking up and down his bedroom long after they had retired, and seemed to have scarcely got to sleep before he was aroused by finding Cameron at his bedside.

"Jump up now, Arthur, throw on your dressing-gown, and clear the cobwebs out of your head, for I have only about ten minutes to talk to you——"

"But how will you——"

"Everything is arranged—your man is getting the boat, and I shall catch the morning mail. Now, first about Miss Tregenna; if you have pluck enough, which I much doubt, you shall go and see her, if not, you must write to her. But in any case she must be told at once that most important business calls you to London, and that your marriage *must* be postponed for at least a fortnight. Now, above all things, speak or write brightly and cheerfully, of course expressing the 'desolation' which you feel at your happiness being deferred, but not giving her the smallest idea of any trouble or difficulty in the matter."

"But am I to go to London?"

"Well no, not to London; I think I have a better place than that. It is perfectly obvious that you must get away from this place. You would worry yourself to death in this solitude, or you would be worried to death by some of the Tregenna people, when they found—as with that extraordinary perverseness which always marks

such things, they would certainly find—that you were remaining here.”

“You are quite right,” said Arthur, quickly. “But where can I go?”

“To see the Slaves of the Lamp, my son.”

“The Slaves of the Lamp! Who are they?”

“Mortals, with almost immortal power; men whose lives are passed in blessing and banning; now establishing a kingdom, now announcing a revolution; a movement of their fingers, and Wall-street wails with panic, or the Bank of England is glutted with gold; wealth, poverty, success, failure, courage, despair; nay, almost life or death are daily distributed by them. In a word, the Lamp gives the light, by the reflected movement of which the messages coming through the Atlantic cable are recorded, and the Slaves are the telegraph clerks!”

“But where are these people, and why should I go to them?”

“Answer, number one. At Valentia, on the west coast of Ireland, in a situation of great wild beauty. Answer, number two. Because the scenery will be all novel to you, and the journey will do you good by distracting your thoughts from your own affairs. Because Mr. Gay, the superintendent, is an intimate friend of mine. I went out there as ‘special’ for the Statesman, to describe the laying of the first cable, and we saw a deal of rough work together in the old Agamemnon. I will give you a letter to him, and guarantee you a welcome from one of the best fellows in the world. And lastly, because you will be there on the spot, in case I want to speak to you across the Atlantic.”

“But how am I to——”

“No time for any more. Here is the letter for Gay. Now give me all the letters you have received from Ellen Pollard since her flight. Two, four, six—this one containing the news of her death, signed by—who is this? Oh, Silas Mumford, Presbyterian clergyman; and this one again, signed by herself, asserting her existence, and claiming hush money.”

“Of course I would have paid the money willingly enough, but——”

“But you were not going to place Miss Tregenna in a false position, and to make a bigamist of yourself, even for the sake of supplying me with the groundwork of a plot for a new novel. By the way, that reminds me. Here is a memorandum of some letters which I have not time to write, and which you must write for me, in my name, at once. One to Morton, States-

man Office, London, saying that business compels me to absent myself for three weeks, but that I hope to be back in time to write the usual leader about the Yule Log, and the Mistletoe, and all the rest of it, for Christmas Eve. One to Gogerty, publisher, Crane-court, London, telling him I have got together all the stuff for Gogerty’s Garland, and it looks pretty good. I’ll make it up on the voyage out, and send it him by the return mail. One to Mrs. Clugh, laundress, No. 3, Dossetter’s-court, Essex-street; telling her to take advantage of my absence to introduce a little soap and water and a scrubbing-brush into my chambers. Now, old fellow, good-bye. Whatever may happen, good or bad, you shall know almost as soon as I know it myself. Within a very few moments of my hearing any news in New York, one of the Slaves of the Lamp shall read it out to you at Valentia. I have given a general idea of your position to Gay, and I know he will pay you every attention. Now, once more, good-bye; if I want you, you must make the best of your way to Queens-town, and come by the next boat.”

Stewart Cameron wrung his friend’s hand and was gone.

Stewart Cameron had rightly estimated his friend. Arthur Stacey had not the pluck to see Miss Tregenna, but he wrote her such a letter as Stewart had advised, telling her that the business upon which he was called away was of most vital importance. She could guess what he must feel at having to tear himself away from her at such a time, and he could comprehend what he hoped were her feelings in the matter, but that during their enforced separation, he should never cease to, &c., and he knew that she would never cease to, &c.; in fact, the style of letter which, under such circumstances, has been written from time immemorial, and the popularity of which, from all that can be seen to the contrary, is likely to continue.

Then he further followed Stewart’s advice by quitting Meneage at once; but, that step taken, he began to act upon his own ideas. He would go to Valentia, of course, but he did not see any occasion to hurry to his destination. The Cunard steamer, by which, as he saw from the paper, Stewart had sailed, was the Scotia, the fastest of the fleet, but even she must take ten days to arrive at her destination, and then Stewart would have his inquiries to make. So he travelled leisurely to London, and took up his quarters at the Tavistock, in the vain

hope that he might distract his thoughts from the dreary channel in which they never ceased to flow. He had not been a frequent visitor to town since his youthful days, when, like most provincial young men, he knew more of metropolitan amusements and dissipation than most Londoners; but on this occasion he found himself sitting in theatres and supper-rooms, as pre-occupied, and as self-contained, as he had been in his solitude at Meneage, and ever asking himself the constantly recurring question, "What will be the result of Stewart's mission—what future is in store for me?"

He hoped for relief in Dublin, which was a strange city to him, but there the same thoughts and fears eternally haunted him, and would not be laid. Thence, at last, he made his way to Killarney, at that season of the year bleak, blank, and desolate; and thence through the wildest part of Kerry, now winding round the base of mountains, whose tops were enshrouded in purple mist, now crossing narrow stone bridges, under which the storm-swollen rivers ran brown and foaming; now traversing vast tracts of bog-land where the water stood in stagnant pools, and where, here and there, on the bare brown earth from which it had been stripped, the peat lay piled in sods for the winter firing; until he passed through the wretched little town of Cahirciveen, a mile or two beyond which is the ferry connecting the island of Valentia with the mainland.

It was during this portion of his journey that the misery of his position, the horror under which he was suffering on the night of Cameron's arrival, recurred to Arthur Stacey in its fullest force. The savage grandeur of the scenery, the squalor of the mud cabins, the desolate gaunt look of the few human beings he encountered, all had their effect in lowering his spirits and rendering more direful the aspect of the crisis through which he was passing.

He recovered a little when, after a brief interval of rest at the comfortable inn at Valentia, he went over to the handsome block of buildings in which are placed the offices and residences of the Slaves of the Lamp, and was received with great cordiality by their chief. Mr. Gay took Arthur through the building, showing him the handsome hall, where, stowed away for the winter, lay the sails and sculls, the cricket-bats and croquet-mallets, and other implements of summer pastime; the superintendent's own office, filled with scientific works and apparatus; the mess-room, the

dormitory, and finally the darkened sanctum of the Lamp and of its reflecting Mirror.

There they were, and there before them was the Slave. There he sat with his eyes intently fixed on a framed white-paper screen in front of him, on which was received the image of the flame reflected from the mirror; while the movements of this spot of light to the right or left of the centre of the paper screen conveyed to the Slave the letters which, formed into words, were read off by him and taken down by a fellow Slave at his side.

"New York, November the 21st, Cunard S. S. Scotia, arrived this morning at ten A.M.," read the Slave, and Stacey knew that by that time Cameron was at work.

That thought rather intensified than relieved his anxiety. He found himself constantly wondering what steps Cameron would take for the elucidation of the mystery. What he might be doing at that particular time, why Ellen Pollard had sent over to England the news of her death, and how she can have been a gainer by the device. Maud Tregenna, too, Arthur could scarcely bear to think of her! He had, while in London, received a letter from her so full of trust and confidence in him, so mindful of his interests, making so much of any question involving his happiness, and so little of her disappointment and distress at his absence and the postponement of the wedding, that he felt half inclined to despise himself for practising even a necessary deception upon her. He had replied to the letter, telling her that his business called him to Ireland, but that his movements would be so uncertain, liable as he was to be summoned from place to place, that he could not give her any fixed address. He would, however, of course write to her. And he had done so. On the second night after his arrival at Valentia, he sat down in the inn guest-room, a chamber which he thought might in the summer look pretty enough, with its view over the ferry, but which was somewhat chill and gaunt in winter, and wrote to Maud Tregenna, such a letter as during his lifetime he had never written. He was not naturally a man of impulse, or easily moved to warmth of expression; but in this letter he poured out all the wealth of love which he had hoarded during the past, all his hopes for their joint future. It seemed, while he was engaged on it, to be an antidote against the surrounding gloom; but by the next morning its effect was gone, and the reaction setting in rendered him worse than ever.

That night Arthur Stacey thought his senses were about to leave him. As he sat over the smouldering fire, and listened to the roaring of the wind without, he thought it would be almost better to return to Cornwall, and tell Maud Tregenna the whole truth, than prolong the mental agony which he had endured that day. In the morning, as on the other days since his arrival, he had visited the temple of the Lamp, the light of which is never extinguished night or day, and had seen the watchful Slaves at their never-ending task. Then he had gone out to the lighthouse, and through the Knight of Kerry's grounds, and from Bray Head had watched the long Atlantic rollers come thundering shoreward, evidences of the storm that had taken place perhaps a thousand leagues away. Such, at least, Arthur Stacey thought them as he gazed on them from the bleak, barren height, and regarded them as ill-omens of the conflict that was raging on his behalf far away in the West.

He ought to have been tired by his wanderings, but the cosiest bed in the world would scarcely have tempted him to sleep, and he was unwilling to tempt the weary unrest and the tossing to and fro, listening to the wailing of the waves, which he knew awaited him up-stairs. He had looked through every sheet of the thumbled and dirty newspapers which lay about the room, and read through all the idiotic scrawl with which the "visitors' book" was bespattered. A torn Black's Guide, and the cover of a work which purported to be "Your Fate Foretold; or, the Norwood Gipsy's Oracle," but the contents of which had apparently cast their skin and vanished, constituted all the literature of the inn.

Arthur thought he would try the traveller's last resource of chatting with the landlord; but the landlord had gone to market at Calhirciveen, and would not be back till late, and he had neither the inclination nor the courage to break in upon the convivial circle, whose boisterous mirth came pealing in from the kitchen. One hope was left him, his servant might have thought to pack some books in the port-manteau. He would go and see.

No, no books, only clothes, and—good Heavens! what is this? The packet of letters concerning Ellen Pollard, which Cameron so particularly desired to take away with him, and without which his inquiries will probably be fruitless? The light in the bedroom was too dim to enable Arthur to convince himself, and he hurried down-stairs with the packet in his hand.

No, they were not the letters! Thank Heaven for that! What were they then? A series of manuscripts of different shapes and size, and evidently in various hands, neatly folded, docketed, and tied together in one general wrapping sheet, on which were the following words pencilled in Cameron's well-known hand:

G.'s G. for 187—.

Two horrors—Burke? Hare? (after "Burke" was written "ill—try Grimmer.")

One ghost—explicable.

One ditto—inexplicable.

Comic verse.

Serious ditto.

One London Life—Streeter.

One Sporting ditto—Knox.

One Rambling Experience—Self.

Query—something Irish—Nugent R.?

"G.'s G.?" said Arthur Stacey to himself, "and manuscripts? These must be the intended contents of the Garland, about which I wrote on Stewart's behalf, and which Stewart fondly imagined he had taken with him to arrange on the voyage. He'll be in a tremendous state of mind about it, but I think his wrath would be mitigated if he knew how opportunely they have come in for my relief. Now, let us see what they are about."

He took up the first paper, and listlessly turned over the leaves for a few moments. Presently, finding the manuscript easier to decipher than he had at first expected, he addressed himself to its perusal in earnest.

IN THE CONFESSIONAL.

THE things of which I write befel—let me see, some fifteen or eighteen years ago. I was not young then; I am not old now. Perhaps I was about thirty-two; but I do not know my age very exactly, and I cannot be certain to a year or two one way or the other.

My manner of life at that time was desultory and unsettled. I had a sorrow—no matter of what kind—and I took to rambling about Europe; not certainly in the hope of forgetting it, for I had no wish to forget, but because of the restlessness that made one place after another triste and intolerable to me.

It was change of place, however, and not excitement, that I sought. I kept almost entirely aloof from great cities, spas, and beaten tracks, and preferred, for the most part, to explore districts where travellers and foreigners rarely penetrated.

Such a district at that time was the

Upper Rhine. I was traversing it that particular summer for the first time, and on foot, and I had set myself to trace the course of the river from its source in the great Rhine glacier to its fall at Schaffhausen. Having done this, however, I was unwilling to part company with the noble river, so I decided to follow it yet a few miles farther—perhaps as far as Mayence, but at all events as far as Basle.

And now began, if not the finest, certainly not the least charming part of my journey. Here, it is true, were neither Alps nor glaciers, nor ruined castles perched on inaccessible crags, but my way lay through a smiling country studded with picturesque hamlets, and beside a bright river hurrying along over swirling rapids, and under the dark arches of antique covered bridges, and between hill-sides garlanded with vines.

It was towards the middle of a long day's walk among such scenes as these, that I came to Rheinfelden, a small place on the left bank of the river, about fourteen miles above Basle.

As I came down the white road in the blinding sunshine, with the vines on either hand, I saw the town lying low on the opposite bank of the Rhine. It was an old walled town, enclosed on the land side, and open to the river, the houses going sheer down to the water's edge, with flights of slimy steps worn smooth by the wash of the current, and overhanging eaves, and little built-out rooms with pent-house roofs, supported from below by jutting piles black with age, and tapestried with water-weeds. The stunted towers of a couple of churches stood up from amid the brown and tawny roofs within the walls. Beyond the town, height above height, stretched a distance of wooded hills. The old covered bridge, divided by a bit of rocky island in the middle of the stream, led from bank to bank—from Germany to Switzerland. The town was in Switzerland; I, looking towards it from the road, stood on Baden territory; the river ran sparkling and foaming between.

I crossed, and found the place all alive in anticipation of a Kermess, or fair, that was to be held there the next day but one. The townsfolk were all out in the streets, or standing about their doors; and there were carpenters hard at work knocking up rows of wooden stands and stalls, the whole length of the principal thoroughfare. Shop-signs in open work of wrought iron hung over the doors. A runlet of sparkling water babbled down a stone channel in the middle

of the street. At almost every other house (to judge by the rows of tarnished watches hanging in the dingy parlour windows), there lived a watchmaker; and presently I came to a fountain, a regular Swiss fountain, spouting water from four ornamental pipes, and surmounted by the usual armed knight in old grey stone.

As I rambled on thus (looking for an inn, but seeing none), I suddenly found that I had reached the end of the street, and, with it, the limit of the town on this side. Before me rose a lofty, picturesque old gate-tower, with a tiled roof, and a little window over the archway, and there was a peep of green grass and golden sunshine beyond. The town walls (sixty or seventy feet in height, and curiously roofed, with a sort of projecting shed on the inner side) curved away to right and left, unchanged since the Middle Ages. A rude wain, laden with clover, and drawn by mild-eyed, cream-coloured oxen, stood close by in the shade.

I passed out through the gloom of the archway into the sunny space beyond. The moat outside the walls was bridged over and filled in—a green ravine of grasses and wild-flowers. A stork had built its nest on the roof of the gate-tower. The cicadas shrilled in the grass. The shadows lay sleeping under the trees, and a family of cocks and hens went plodding inquisitively to and fro among the cabbages in the adjacent field. Just beyond the moat, with only this field between, stood a little solitary church—a church with a wooden porch, and a quaint, bright-red steeple, and a churchyard like a rose-garden, full of colour and perfume, and scattered over with iron crosses wreathed with immortelles.

The churchyard gate and the church door stood open. I went in. All was clean, and simple, and very poor. The walls were whitewashed; the floor was laid with red bricks; the roof raftered. A tiny confessional like a sentry-box stood in one corner; the font was covered with a lid like a wooden steeple; and over the altar, upon which stood a pair of battered brass candlesticks and two vases of artificial flowers, hung a caricature of the Holy Family, in oils.

All here was so cool, so quiet, that I sat down for a few moments and rested. Presently an old peasant woman trudged up the church path with a basket of vegetables on her head. Having set this down in the porch, she came in, knelt before the altar, said her simple prayers, and went her way.

Was it not time for me also to go my way? I looked at my watch. It was past four o'clock, and I had not yet found a lodging for the night.

I got up, somewhat unwillingly; but, attracted by a tablet near the altar, crossed over to look at it before leaving the church. It was a very small slab, and bore a very brief German inscription to this effect:

TO THE SACRED MEMORY

OF

THE REVEREND PÈRE CHESSEZ,

For twenty years the beloved Pastor of this Parish.

Died April 16th, 1825. Aged 44.

HE LIVED A SAINT; HE DIED A MARTYR.

I read it over twice, wondering idly what story was wrapped up in the concluding line. Then, prompted by a childish curiosity, I went up to examine the confessional.

It was, as I have said, about the size of a sentry-box, and was painted to imitate old dark oak. On the one side was a narrow door with a black handle, on the other a little opening like a ticket-taker's window, closed on the inside by a faded green curtain.

I know not what foolish fancy possessed me, but, almost without considering what I was doing, I turned the handle and opened the door. Opened it, peeped in, found the priest sitting in his place, started back as if I had been shot, and stammered an unintelligible apology.

"I—I beg a thousand pardons," I exclaimed. "I had no idea—seeing the church empty——"

He was sitting with averted face, and clasped hands lying idly in his lap—a tall, gaunt man, dressed in a black soutane. When I paused, and not till then, he slowly, very slowly, turned his head, and looked me in the face.

The light inside the confessional was so dim that I could not see his features very plainly. I only observed that his eyes were large, and bright, and wild-looking, like the eyes of some fierce animal, and that his face, with the reflection of the green curtain upon it, looked lividly pale.

For a moment we remained thus, gazing at each other, as if fascinated. Then, finding that he made no reply, but only stared at me with those strange eyes, I stepped hastily back, shut the door without another word, and hurried out of the church.

I was very much disturbed by this little incident, more disturbed, in truth, than seemed reasonable, for my nerves for the moment were quite shaken. Never, I told myself, never while I lived could I forget that fixed attitude and stony face, or the

glare of those terrible eyes. What was the man's history? Of what secret despair, of what life-long remorse, of what wild unsatisfied longings was he the victim? I felt I could not rest till I had learned something of his past life.

Full of these thoughts, I went on quickly into the town, half running across the field, and never looking back. Once past the gateway, and inside the walls, I breathed more freely. The wain was still standing in the shade, but the oxen were gone now, and two men were busy forking out the clover into a little yard close by. Having inquired of one of these regarding an inn, and being directed to the Krone, "over against the Frauenkirche," I made my way to the upper part of the town, and there, at one corner of a forlorn, weed-grown market-place, I found my hostelry.

The landlord, a sedate, bald man, in spectacles, who, as I presently discovered, was not only an inn-keeper, but a clock-maker, came out from an inner room to receive me. His wife, a plump, pleasant body, took my orders for dinner. His pretty daughter showed me to my room. It was a large, low, whitewashed room, with two lattice windows, overlooking the market-place, two little beds, covered with puffy red eiderdowns at the farther end, and an army of clocks and ornamental timepieces arranged along every shelf, table, and chest of drawers in the room. Being left here to my meditations, I sat down and counted these companions of my solitude.

Taking little and big together, Dutch clocks, cuckoo clocks, chalet clocks, skeleton clocks, and pendules in ormolu, bronze, marble, ebony, and alabaster cases, there were exactly thirty-two. Twenty-eight were going merrily. As no two among them were of the same opinion as regarded the time, and as several struck the quarters as well as the hours, the consequence was that one or other gave tongue about every five minutes. Now, for a light and nervous sleeper such as I was at that time, here was a lively prospect for the night!

Going down-stairs presently with the hope of getting my landlady to assign me a quieter room, I passed two eight-day clocks on the landing, and a third at the foot of the stairs. The public room was equally well stocked. It literally bristled with clocks, one of which played a spasmodic version of Gentle Zitiella, with variations, every quarter of an hour. Here I found a little table prepared by the open window, and a dish of trout and a flask of country wine awaiting me. The pretty

daughter waited upon me. Her mother bustled to and fro with the dishes; and the landlord stood by, and beamed upon me through his spectacles.

"The trout were caught this morning, about two miles from here," he said, complacently.

"They are excellent," I replied, filling him out a glass of wine, and helping myself to another. "Your health, Herr Wirth."

"Thanks, mein Herr—yours."

Just at this moment two clocks struck at opposite ends of the room—one twelve and the other seven. I ventured to suggest that mine host was tolerably well reminded of the flight of time; whereupon he explained that his work lay chiefly in the repairing and regulating line, and that at that present moment he had no less than one hundred and eighteen clocks of various sorts and sizes on the premises.

"Perhaps the Herr Engländer is a light sleeper," said his quick-witted wife, detecting my dismay. "If so, we can get him a bedroom elsewhere. Not perhaps in the town, for I know no place where he would be as comfortable as with ourselves, but just outside the Friedrich's Thor, not five minutes' walk from our door."

I accepted the offer gratefully.

"So long," I said, "as I insure cleanliness and quiet, I do not care how homely my lodgings may be."

"Ah, you'll have both, mein Herr, if you go where my wife is thinking of," said the landlord. "It is at the house of our pastor—the Père Chessez."

"The Père Chessez!" I exclaimed. "What, the pastor of the little church out yonder?"

"The same, mein Herr."

"But—but surely the Père Chessez is dead! I saw a tablet to his memory in the chancel."

"Nay, that was our pastor's elder brother," replied the landlord, looking grave. "He has been gone these thirty years and more. His was a tragical ending."

But I was thinking too much of the younger brother just then to feel any curiosity about the elder; and I told myself that I would put up with the companionship of any number of clocks, rather than sleep under the same roof with that terrible face and those unearthly eyes.

"I saw your pastor just now in the church," I said, with apparent indifference. "He is a singular-looking man."

"He is too good for this world," said the landlady.

"He is a saint upon earth!" added the pretty Fraülein.

"He is one of the best of men," said, more soberly, the husband and father. "I only wish he was less of a saint. He fasts, and prays, and works beyond his strength. A little more beef and a little less devotion would be all the better for him."

"I should like to hear something more about the life of so good a man," said I, having by this time come to the end of my simple dinner. "Come, Herr Wirth, let us have a bottle of your best, and then sit down and tell me your pastor's history!"

The landlord sent his daughter for a bottle of the "green seal," and, taking a chair, said:

"Ach Himmel! mein Herr, there is no history to tell. The good father has lived here all his life. He is one of us. His father, Johann Chessez, was a native of Rheinfelden, and kept this very inn. He was a wealthy farmer, and vine-grower as well. He had only those two sons—Nicholas, who took to the church, and became pastor of Feldkirche; and this one, Matthias, who was intended to inherit the business; but who also entered religion after the death of his elder brother, and is now pastor of the same parish."

"But why did he 'enter religion'?" I asked. "Was he in any way to blame for the accident (if it was an accident) that caused the death of his elder brother?"

"Ah, Heavens! no!" exclaimed the landlady, leaning on the back of her husband's chair. "It was the shock—the shock that told so terribly upon his poor nerves! He was but a lad at that time, and as sensitive as a girl—but the Herr Engländer does not know the story. Go on, my husband."

So the landlord, after a sip of the "green seal," continued:

"At the time my wife alludes to, mein Herr, Johann Chessez was still living. Nicholas, the elder son, was in holy orders and established in the parish of Feldkirche, outside the walls; and Matthias, the younger, was a lad of about fourteen years old, and lived with his father. He was an amiable, good boy—pious and thoughtful—fonder of his books than of the business. The neighbour-folk used to say even then that Matthias was cut out for a priest, like his elder brother. As for Nicholas, he was neither more nor less than a saint. Well, mein Herr, at this time there lived on the other side of Rheinfelden, about a mile beyond the Basel Thor, a farmer named Caspar Rufenacht and his

wife Margaret. Now Caspar Rufenacht was a jealous, quarrelsome fellow; and the Frau Margaret was pretty; and he led her a devil of a life. It was said that he used to beat her when he had been drinking, and that sometimes, when he went to fair or market, he would lock her up for the whole day in a room at the top of the house. Well, this poor, ill-used Frau Margaret——”

“Tut, tut, my man,” interrupted the landlady. “The Frau Margaret was a light one!”

“Peace, wife! Shall we speak hard words of the dead? The Frau Margaret was young, and pretty, and a flirt; and she had a bad husband who left her too much alone.”

The landlady pursed up her lips, and shook her head, as the best of women will do when the character of another woman is under discussion. The innkeeper went on.

“Well, mein Herr, to cut a long story short, after having been jealous first of one and then of another, Caspar Rufenacht became furious about a certain German, a Badener, named Schmidt, living on the opposite bank of the Rhine. I remember the man quite well, a handsome, merry fellow, and no saint; just the sort to make mischief between man and wife. Well, Caspar Rufenacht swore a great oath that, cost what it might, he would come at the truth about his wife and Schmidt; so he laid all manner of plots to surprise them—waylaid the Frau Margaret in her walks, followed her at a distance when she went to church, came home at unexpected hours, and played the spy as if he had been brought up to the trade. But his spying was all in vain. Either the Frau Margaret was too clever for him, or there was really nothing to discover, but still he was not satisfied. So he cast about for some way to attain his end, and, by the help of the Evil One, he found it.”

Here the innkeeper's wife and daughter, who had doubtless heard the story a hundred times over, drew near and listened breathlessly.

“What, think you,” continued the landlord, “does this black-souled Caspar do? Does he punish the poor woman within an inch of her life, till she confesses? No. Does he charge Schmidt with having tempted her from her duty, and fight it out with him like a man? No. What else then? I will tell you. He waits till the vigil of St. Margaret—her saint's day—when he knows the poor sinful soul is going to confession; and he marches straight to the house

of the Père Chessez—the very house where our own Père Chessez is now living—and he finds the good priest at his devotions in his little study, and he says to him: ‘Father Chessez, my wife is coming to the church this afternoon to make her confession to you.’ ‘She is,’ replies the priest. ‘I want you to tell me all she tells you,’ says Caspar; ‘and I will wait here till you come back from the church, that I may hear it. Will you do so?’ ‘Certainly not,’ replies the Père Chessez; ‘you must surely know, Caspar, that we priests are forbidden to reveal the secrets of the confessional.’ ‘That is nothing to me,’ says Caspar, with an oath. ‘I am resolved to know whether my wife is guilty or innocent; and know it I will, by fair means or foul.’ ‘You shall never know it from me, Caspar,’ says the Père Chessez, very quietly. ‘Then, by Heavens!’ says Caspar, ‘I’ll learn it for myself.’ And with that he pulls out a heavy horse-pistol from his pocket, and with the butt-end of it deals the Père Chessez a tremendous blow upon the head, and then another, and another, till the poor young man lay senseless at his feet. Then Caspar, thinking he had quite killed him, dressed himself in the priest's own soutane and hat, locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and stealing round the back way into the church, shut himself up in the confessional.”

“Then the priest died!” I exclaimed, remembering the epitaph upon the tablet.

“Ay, mein Herr—the Père Chessez died; but not before he had told the story of his assassination, and identified his murderer.”

“And Caspar Rufenacht, I hope, was hanged?”

“Wait a bit, mein Herr, we have not come to that yet. We left Caspar in the confessional, waiting for his wife.”

“And she came?”

“Yes, poor soul! she came.”

“And made her confession?”

“And made her confession, mein Herr.”

“What did she confess?”

The innkeeper shook his head.

“That no one ever knew, save the good God and her murderer.”

“Her murderer!” I exclaimed.

“Ay, just that. Whatever it was that she confessed, she paid for it with her life. He heard her out, at all events, without discovering himself, and let her go home believing that she had received absolution for her sins. Those who met her that afternoon said she seemed unusually bright and happy. As she passed through the

town, she went into a shop in the Mon-
garten Strasse and bought some ribbons.
About half an hour later, my own father
met her outside the Basel Thor, walking
briskly homewards. He was the last who
saw her alive. That evening (it was in
October, and the days were short), some
travellers coming that way into the town
heard shrill cries, as of a woman scream-
ing, in the direction of Caspar's farm. But
the night was very dark, and the house lay
back a little way from the road; so they
told themselves it was only some drunken
peasant quarrelling with his wife, and
passed on. Next morning Caspar Rufenacht
came to Rheinfelden, walked very quietly
into the Polizei, and gave himself up to
justice. 'I have killed my wife,' said he.
'I have killed the Père Chessez. And I
have committed sacrilege.' And so, indeed,
it was. As for the Frau Margaret, they
found her body in an upper chamber, well-
nigh hacked to pieces, and the hatchet with
which the murder was committed lying
beside her on the floor. He had pursued
her, apparently, from room to room; for
there were pools of blood and handfuls of
long light hair, and marks of bloody hands
along the walls, all the way from the
kitchen to the spot where she lay dead."

"And so he was hanged?" said I, com-
ing back to my original question.

"Yes, yes," replied the innkeeper and
his womankind in chorus. "He was
hanged, of course he was hanged."

"And it was the shock of this double
tragedy that drove the younger Chessez
into the church?"

"Just so, mein Herr."

"Well, he carries it in his face. He
looks like a most unhappy man."

"Nay, he is not that, mein Herr!" ex-
claimed the landlady. "He is melancholy,
but not unhappy."

"Well, then, austere."

"Nor is he austere, except towards him-
self."

"True, wife," said the innkeeper; "but,
as I said, he carries that sort of thing too
far. You understand, mein Herr," he
added, touching his forehead with his fore-
finger, "the good pastor has let his mind
dwell too much upon the past. He is
nervous, too nervous, and too low."

I saw it all now. That terrible light in
his eyes was the light of insanity. That
stony look in his face was the fixed, hope-
less melancholy of a mind diseased.

"Does he know that he is mad?" I
asked, as the landlord rose to go. He
shrugged his shoulders and looked doubtful.

"I have not said that the Père Chessez
is mad, mein Herr," he replied. "He has
strange fancies sometimes, and takes his
fancies for facts, that is all. But I am
quite sure that he does not believe himself
to be less sane than his neighbours."

So the innkeeper left me, and I (my
head full of the story I had just heard)
put on my hat, went out into the market-
place, asked my way to the Basel Thor,
and set off to explore the scene of the Frau
Margaret's murder.

I found it without difficulty—a long,
low-fronted, beetle-browed farm-house,
lying back a meadow's length from the
road. There were children playing upon
the threshold, a flock of turkeys gobbling
about the barn-door, and a big dog sleeping
outside his kennel close by. The chimneys,
too, were smoking merrily. Seeing these
signs of life and cheerfulness, I abandoned
all idea of asking to go over the house.
I felt that I had no right to carry my
morbid curiosity into this peaceful home;
so I turned away, and retraced my steps
towards Rheinfelden.

It was not yet seven, and the sun had
still an hour's course to run. I re-entered
the town, strolled back through the street,
and presently came again to the Friedrich's
Thor and the path leading to the church.
An irresistible impulse seemed to drag me
back to the place. Shudderingly, and with
a sort of dread that was half longing, I
pushed open the churchyard gate and went
in. The doors were closed; a goat was
browsing among the graves; and the rush-
ing of the Rhine, some three hundred yards
away, was distinctly audible in the silence.
I looked round for the priest's house—the
scene of the first murder; but from this
side, at all events, no house was visible.
Going round, however, to the back of the
church, I saw a gate, a box-bordered path,
and, peeping through some trees, a chimney
and the roof of a little brown-tiled house.

This, then, was the path along which
Caspar Rufenacht, with the priest's blood
upon his hands, and the priest's gown
upon his shoulders, had taken his guilty
way to the confessional! How quiet it
all looked in the golden evening light!
How like the church path of an English
parsonage!

I wished I could have seen something
more of the house than that bit of roof
and that one chimney. There must, I told
myself, be some other entrance—some way
round by the road! Musing and lingering
thus, I was startled by a quiet voice close
against my shoulder, saying:

"A pleasant evening, mein Herr!"

I turned, and found the priest at my elbow. He had come noiselessly across the grass, and was standing between me and the sunset, like a shadow.

"I—I beg your pardon," I stammered, moving away from the gate. "I was looking——"

I stopped in some surprise, and indeed with some sense of relief; for it was not the same priest that I had seen in the morning. No two, indeed, could well be more unlike; for this man was small, white-haired, gentle-looking, with a soft, sad smile inexpressibly sweet and winning.

"You were looking at my arbutus?" he said.

I had scarcely observed the arbutus till now, but I bowed and said something to the effect that it was an unusually fine tree.

"Yes," he replied; "but I have a rhododendron round at the front that is still finer. Will you come in and see it?"

I said I should be pleased to do so; he led the way, and I followed.

"I hope you like this part of our Rhine-country?" he said, as we took the path through the shrubbery.

"I like it so well," I replied, "that if I were to live anywhere on the banks of the Rhine, I should certainly choose some spot on the Upper Rhine between Schaffhausen and Basle."

"And you would be right," he said. "Nowhere is the river so beautiful. Nearer the glaciers it is milky and turbid—beyond Basle it soon becomes muddy. Here we have it blue as the sky—sparkling as champagne. Here is my rhododendron. It stands twelve feet high, and measures as many in diameter. I had more than two hundred blooms upon it last spring."

When I had duly admired this giant shrub, he took me to a little arbour on a bit of steep green bank overlooking the river, where he invited me to sit down and rest. From hence I could see the porch and part of the front of his little house; but it was all so closely planted round with trees and shrubs, that no clear view of it seemed obtainable in any direction. Here we sat for some time chatting about the weather, the approaching vintage, and so forth, and watching the sunset. Then I rose to take my leave.

"I heard of you this evening at the Krone, mein Herr," he said. "You were out, or I should have called upon you. I am glad that chance has made us acquainted. Do you remain over to-morrow?"

"No; I must go on to-morrow to Basle,"

I answered. And then, hesitating a little, I added: "You heard of me, also, I fear, in the church."

"In the church?" he repeated.

"Seeing the door open, I went in—from curiosity—as a traveller; just to look round for a moment, and rest."

"Naturally."

"I—I had no idea, however, that I was not alone there. I would not for the world have intruded——"

"I do not understand," he said, seeing me hesitate. "The church stands open all day long. It is free to every one."

"Ah! I see he has not told you!"

The priest smiled, but looked puzzled.

"He? Whom do you mean?"

"The other priest, mon père—your colleague. I regret to have broken in upon his meditations; but I had been so long in the church, and it was all so still and quiet, that it never occurred to me that there might be some one in the confessional."

The priest looked at me in a strange, startled way.

"In the confessional!" he repeated, with a catching of his breath. "You saw some one—in the confessional?"

"I am ashamed to say that, having thoughtlessly opened the door——"

"You saw—what did you see?"

"A priest, mon père."

"A priest! Can you describe him? Should you know him again? Was he pale, and tall, and gaunt, with long black hair?"

"The same, undoubtedly."

"And his eyes—did you observe anything particular about his eyes?"

"Yes, they were large, wild-looking, dark eyes, with a look in them—a look I cannot describe."

"A look of terror!" cried the pastor, now greatly agitated. "A look of terror—of remorse—of despair!"

"Yes, it was a look that might mean all that," I replied, my astonishment increasing at every word. "You seem troubled. Who is he?"

But instead of answering my question, the pastor took off his hat, looked up with a radiant, awe-struck face, and said:

"All-merciful God, I thank Thee! I thank Thee that I am not mad, and that Thou hast sent this stranger to be my assurance and my comfort!"

Having said these words, he bowed his head, and his lips moved in silent prayer. When he looked up again, his eyes were full of tears.

"My son," he said, laying his trembling hand upon my arm, "I owe you an expla-

nation; but I cannot give it to you now. It must wait till I can speak more calmly—till to-morrow, when I must see you again. It involves a terrible story—a story peculiarly painful to myself—enough now if I tell you that I have seen the Thing you describe—seen it many times; and yet, because it has been visible to my eyes alone, I have doubted the evidence of my senses. The good people here believe that much sorrow and meditation have touched my brain. I have half believed it myself till now. But you—you have proved to me that I am the victim of no illusion.”

“But, in Heaven’s name,” I exclaimed, “what do you suppose I saw in the confessional?”

“You saw the likeness of one who, guilty also of a double murder, committed the deadly sin of sacrilege in that very spot, more than thirty years ago,” replied the Père Chessez, solemnly.

“Caspar Rufenacht!”

“Ah! you have heard the story? Then I am spared the pain of telling it to you. That is well.”

I bent my head in silence, and we walked together without another word to the wicket, and thence round to the churchyard gate. It was now twilight, and the first stars were out.

“Good-night, my son,” said the pastor, giving me his hand. “Peace be with you.”

As he spoke the words, his grasp tightened—his eyes dilated—his whole countenance became rigid.

“Look!” he whispered. “Look where it goes!”

I followed the direction of his eyes, and there, with a freezing horror which I have no words to describe, I saw—distinctly saw through the deepening gloom—a tall, dark figure in a priest’s soutane and broad-brimmed hat, moving slowly across the path leading from the parsonage to the church. For a moment it seemed to pause—then passed on to the deeper shade, and disappeared.

“You saw it?” said the pastor.

“Yes—plainly.”

He drew a deep breath; crossed himself devoutly; and leaned upon the gate, as if exhausted.

“This is the third time I have seen it this year,” he said. “Again I thank God for the certainty that I see a visible thing, and that His great gift of reason is mine unimpaired. But I would that He were graciously pleased to release me from the sight—the horror of it is sometimes more than I know how to bear. Good-night.”

With this, he again touched my hand; so, seeing that he wished to be alone, I silently left him. At the Friedrich’s Thor I turned and looked back. He was still standing by the churchyard gate, just visible through the gloom of the fast deepening twilight.

I never saw the Père Chessez again. Save his own old servant, I was the last who spoke with him in this world. He died that night—died in his bed, where he was found next morning with his hands crossed upon his breast, and with a placid smile upon his lips, as if he had fallen asleep in the act of prayer.

As the news spread from house to house, the whole town rang with lamentations. The church-bells tolled; the carpenters left their work in the streets; the children, dismissed from school, went home weeping.

“‘Twill be the saddest Kermess in Rheinfelden to-morrow, mien Herr!” said my good host of the Krone, as I shook hands with him at parting. “We have lost the best of pastors and of friends. He was a saint. If you had come but one day later, you would not have seen him!”

And with this he brushed his sleeve across his eyes, and turned away.

Every shutter was up, every blind down, every door closed, as I passed along the Friedrich’s Strasse about mid-day, on my way to Basle; and the few townsfolk I met looked grave and downcast. Then I crossed the bridge, and, having shown my passport to the German sentry on the Baden side, I took one long, last farewell look at the little walled town as it lay sleeping in the sunshine by the river—knowing that I should see it no more. •

“THAT’S ‘one ghost,’ evidently,” said Arthur Stacey, referring to Cameron’s pencilled memorandum, “and I should say decidedly ‘inexplicable.’ Now for the next,” and he took up the underlying paper, which was labelled—

THE SIGNOR JOHN.

I.

It seems but this morning that I got up before the sun, in our little wooden house, to cook, bake, wash in the river, help to mow the grass, coax my father, serve my brother Niccolo, and be as happy as the grasshoppers that sing both night and day. We lived upon a very high Alp, and we were poor, though we did not suffer hard-

ship. In winter we had plenty of pine-logs to keep the fire alive, and at night we were very gay, singing songs, and playing the zither. In summer we breakfasted on the grass in the faint dawn, dined under the long roof at the sheltered side of the house, and supped by the starlight; after which I danced for my father, while Niccolo played the pipes. The chance passing of travellers was an excitement to us. A wood-carver from the Tyrol sprained his foot near our place, and taught Niccolo to carve whilst we nursed him. This was something to be grateful for, as travellers would buy the work, and besides, it gave our boy something to do. He was a cripple from his birth; one foot did not come to the ground somehow, and his back was a good deal bent. He had a little square face, with bright eyes, and brown hair, and was said to be quite a Swiss, as our mother had been. The first figure he carved was my patron saint, Christopher, wading through the torrent with the Child-God on his shoulders, and it was given me after he had bitten one of my fingers because I had stayed out alone in the moonlight, forgetting to fetch him. He never was so vexed, however, that I could not offer him comfort, asking him to plait my long hair, which came to my ankles. I would sit down on the ground with my back against his knees, when he would dress the hair beautifully. If I were restless he would hurt me, if I were patient he would kiss me; and if his work pleased him fully, he was blithe the rest of the day.

Once I went with my father to a feast at a lower village, the festa of St. Florian. This was the first occasion on which I wore my mother's costume. On the night before the feast I was holding out my foot to note how my shabby skirt had crept up my leg. My father came and measured me with his alpenstock. "You are now as tall as your mother," he said; "you may henceforth wear her clothes." He shed tears in the morning when he saw me in her dress, but was so well pleased afterwards, that I ran to the nearest tarn to see what I could be like. The tarn was nearly filled with rosy clouds, besides a gigantic pine-tree, which tapered up and broke them. I seized the sombre draperies of the pine-tree, and, gazing into the water, saw a maiden like the women whose fathers are wealthy vine-dressers. Her petticoat was of orange cloth, her long, narrow apron of a rich shade of blue, her black velvet bodice was laced with gold over white, and a deep red

sash was folded well about her waist. The only part of the picture that I knew was a pale dark countenance, with bright red lips, and the wide black eyes that seemed to take up half the face. I marked Niccolo's plaits and the silver arrows he had fastened in them, and the bunch of scarlet ash-berries which he had fixed behind my ear. I saw that this was myself, and ran merrily back to the chalet to hug my little Niccolo, and tell him not to pinch our neighbour Teresa, who was kindly coming to keep house for him whilst my father and I were away.

Placido with his mule came to meet us: a young man of the village who had sometimes business on our Alp. He brought us to see his house, in which he had just put pretty furniture, and asked us to praise the fresco of St. Florian upon the gable, which he had lately got retouched for the festa. He had also made a new staircase up to his balcony; and the people joked Placido, saying he meant to take a wife.

It was a very pleasant festa. People treated me as a woman, now that I was grown enough to wear my mother's clothes. I was often asked to dance, and listened to with attention when I sang and played the zither. The next day Placido brought us a long way upon our road towards home; we could not get him to leave us till the worst of the journey was past. Thanks to his stout mule, we got over all our difficulties, and were going along merrily, when we heard a voice above us shouting through the pines.

Right above our heads there was a desert of lonely crags, a wild and dreaded place, where death lies in wait for men. My father left me sitting upon a pine-stump, and went shouting up the crags, seeking the stranger who had called. He returned with him by-and-bye, and we hurried along on our journey, for though the air was flushed with colour, yet the darkness was close at hand. We hastened along in silence, dragging each other up steep, and going hand in hand, step by step, slowly across narrow shifty places. The traveller had a fair foreign look, which is to us most perfect beauty. His locks shone in the twilight, after my father's dusky head had got lost in the gloom of the pines.

Arrived at our Alp at last, we found Teresa preparing supper, and Niccolo sitting in the doorway, piping shrilly up to the moon. The stranger gave me his hand up the last ascent, then raised it to his lips.

"My pretty little girl," he said, "you have certainly saved my life."

When Niccolo saw us coming he limped to meet us.

"Who is this that has come with you, Netta, who smiles and kisses your hand?"

"Hush! Niccolo; he is English, but he understands our talk."

The stranger threw down his hat and knapsack before our door. The firelight shone over the threshold, and our neighbour Teresa appeared carrying out the supper-table, which she placed upon the grass.

The next morning, when I wakened, I peeped down between the rafters of my bedroom in the loft, and saw the stranger talking to my father in the doorway.

I crept down the ladder, and found nobody in the place. Niccolo had lit the fire for me, and gone away to his work, and I heard my father's voice shouting in the distance. The signor was then gone. I heaved a sigh between regret and relief, and seized hold of a pitcher, and prepared to go to the tarn. I made a step across the threshold and started back; the signor was leaning smoking against our châlet.

I sprang back so quickly that I broke the pitcher, and had to press my hand on my eyes to keep the tears from falling.

"Child!" said the signor, smiling in at me, "why do you take such pains to hide your face? One does not see so pretty a thing every day."

"I am not pretty this morning," I said. "It was only my mother's clothes. And I was hiding my face in trouble because I have broken my jug."

"And you were going to fetch water?" he said, "and yonder pail is too heavy for you? And it was all owing to me that you broke the pitcher?"

He lifted the pail on his shoulders. "Come, let us fetch the water," he said; "I shall want you to show the way."

We fetched the water together, and the stranger taught me to call him the Signor John. He had an air grand and gentle, and a pleasant light in his eyes. He laughed gaily when amused, and that encouraged me. At breakfast we saw no Niccolo, and I invited the Signor John to look at his carvings: at St. Barbara with her tower, St. Dorothy and her roses, St. Vincent among his orphans, St. Elizabeth, whose royal mantle was filled with bread. Niccolo had carved them all, and they stood in a row in his workshop. They were far the finest things we had got in our châlet; yet when I brought the signor to look at them Niccolo shut the door in his face.

"Never mind!" said the Signor John,

"we can amuse ourselves; I wish to make a sketch of you if you don't object to sit."

"I ought to be at my work," I said; but ran to tell my father, who was chopping wood in the pine-brake.

"It is an honour not to be refused," he said. "You must ask the good Teresa to stay and prepare our dinner."

The signor spread out his pictures for me to see; saying he was an artist only by love, and not by profession. I thought that love must have the best of it, so beautiful was his work; much finer than Placido's fresco, which was considered something grand. There were pictures of lovely ladies who were of his own country; and their beauty seemed to laugh at me, and my heart began to sink.

"Signor," I said, almost tearfully, "shall I not return to the châlet, and put on my mother's clothes?"

"Your mother's clothes!" he cried, amazed.

"Those I had on yesterday. The colours are gay and bright. Else I shall make such an ugly picture—you will throw it away."

"You make far the prettiest picture I have ever seen," he said, "and I shall hang it up where I can look at it every day."

I blushed with surprised delight. "Thank you, Signor John," I muttered, and crossed my hands as he had arranged them, and gazed over into the pine-forest in a way which he had already approved.

The signor remained at our châlet for a whole week. Every morning we started on some new excursion; he and I together, for my father had not time to attend to him, and Niccolo could not walk.

One evening we were all at supper when Placido appeared with his mule coming up our Alp. My father welcomed him kindly, and bade him sit down and eat. He looked strangely at the Signor John, and then at me, but our new friend spoke to him pleasantly, and they were soon conversing together. Placido was a large man, with a calm face. He had dark thoughtful eyes, and brows well bent above them, and a heap of coal-black locks that left his temples broad and bare. He had a slow gentle smile, but was quick and firm in speech. "As steady as Placido Lorez," was a by-word down in his village.

After supper was over Placido seized on the supper-table and carried it back to the châlet; I following on his steps with a dish and ewer. As I washed the platters and restored them to their shelves Placido put logs on the fire, and blew them into flames.

I finished my task and put off my apron, chattering gaily to him all the time. I could see his figure looming out against the firelight, and at the same time my father and the Signor John standing talking out in the moonlight.

Placido had given me very absent answers; but at last made a sudden move, and with two long strides stood right before me.

"Netta," he said, "I came to ask if you would marry me."

I was utterly amazed and a good deal frightened; he looked so very determined, as if I must come off that moment, whether I would or not. My knees knocked together, and I clung to the table.

"You don't really mean it, Placido; you cannot want a wife!"

"Not *any* wife," he said; "I only ask for you."

"Oh, Placido, don't!" I said.

"Look you, my little dearest one!" he urged, "you may think me a rough lover. But never was a wife more loved and prized than you will be, if you come to me!"

"Thank you, Placido," I said, "you mean to be very kind to me; but I do not think about marrying; and please be so very good as not to ask me again."

My father and the Signor John here put in their heads at the door.

"What is this that is going on?" said my father. "Netta! are you scolding our neighbour?"

"Oh, no, no!" cried Placido, "it is only that my suit displeases her. I asked her just now to marry me; and she does not wish to consent."

"What?" cried my father, turning to me. "You don't mean to say that you would refuse so kind an offer? Do not think about me, my daughter. I would rather see you provided for than keep you for my comfort."

"I do not like to marry," I said, weeping. "I do not love Placido, and it would be dreadful to have to marry him."

Placido's face flushed and then turned pale again. "I did not come here to make you weep," he said, sadly. "The pain of my disappointment is not worth one of your tears."

He turned to go away, but my father seized him by the arm. "Wait, my dear friend!" he said, "and do not be offended at a girl who is still a child."

Then turning to the signor, who had looked on gravely at this scene:

"Signor! come to my assistance," he cried. "Netta will heed your counsel."

The signor looked at me tenderly, with an uneasy look in his face.

"As you say, she is only a child," he said. "I beg you will give her a little longer time to play."

"So be it then," said my father.

I drew a long breath of relief, and looked gratefully at the friend who had saved me. Placido gazed from me to the signor, and from the signor back to me; then suddenly laid hold of his alpenstock and bade us a quick good-night.

After this we had some more pleasant days, till at last there arrived a sad one when the signor prepared to leave us. I felt an odd pain in my heart which I could not drive away. The night before his departure I was standing at the fire alone; the logs were almost burnt, and lay in a red heap on the hearth. The signor came and stood by me.

"Netta, when I am gone you must often think of me."

I strove with a sensation of choking.

"What! have you not a word for me?"

"I do not want to weep," I cried, and my tears came down in a storm.

"I will certainly come back next year," said the signor, "and then you will be a woman grown."

I wrung my hand away from him, and fled to my loft. The next morning at breakfast he scarcely looked at me. My father was going a journey with him, and they talked about the roads. Niccolo, who had now become merry, made faces behind the signor's back, while I stood miserably in the doorway, rubbing my chilly hands together. The travellers bade us good-bye, and Niccolo went off to his workshop; but I stood gazing drearily down the Alp.

The signor turned and came back to me.

"Buy yourself a ribbon, pretty one," he said, "when you go to the next festa."

In another moment he was gone, and I had a piece of gold in my hand. I uttered a moan of indignation, and went flying down the Alp. "Signor John! Signor John!" I cried, in a voice that must have been shrill enough to frighten the eagles.

I crushed the money into his hand, but it fell to the ground between us; and he hurried off, laughing, and looking over his shoulder. I dug the earth with my nails, and buried the gold where it lay; then fled away into the pine-brake, to weep long and fiercely. That evening Placido came back and repeated his question. I gave him a sullen "No;" and he went away more sadly than he had done before. And

then I began to get happy again, for Niccolo did not pinch me, and talked to me all about his carvings, just as before the signor came.

But my father came back from his journey with a troubled face.

"Placido has left his village," he said, "and gone to push his way in the world!"

II.

THREE years passed, and I was a staid maiden, who did not care much for festas nor gay clothes. I was not of so merry a temper as I had promised to be, and people thought I was haughty, and some of the girls disliked me. This was partly owing to Niccolo, who would say, "You need not speak to Netta, she is grown so proud: she thinks herself quite a princess since the Englishman kissed her hand!" A little thing gets one a character when gossips are by to talk. Then I did not choose to marry, and that was the worst; for though suitors might not grieve like Placido Lorez, yet no one likes to be refused, and their friends resented my coldness. So I was a lonely kind of creature, and lived in my own way, clinging fast to my father, and only vexed when he would say, "When I am dead and gone, Netta, who will take care of you and our peevish Niccolo?"

So things went on till the avalanche came down upon us, killing my poor father, and burying him in the ruins of our house. The goats and kids were killed, and Niccolo was sorely hurt; and only I, as if by miracle, escaped.

We sat for many hours on the fallen rocks, till the people from the village reached us, when they brought us down to their houses, and treated us like their own. I tried to give little trouble, for I had nothing to give them in return; nothing at all had we saved but the clothes we wore; Niccolo's arm was hurt so that he could not carve, and a woman's work is not much when she has not got a home to work in. The housewives in the village had got daughters of their own, and nobody seemed in need of a girl to help them. The worst was that nobody would love Niccolo, for, besides being utterly helpless, the lad had a biting tongue.

Placido's aged mother came out to look at me; when she saw my saddened face the tears came down her cheek.

"My girl," she said, "I have hated you, for you sent my son away, but the Lord has sent you trouble, and I must forgive you."

She brought me into her house, and I

told her my bitter thoughts, and that I wanted to go down to the world where wages are given to labour.

"At Como," she said, "are the silk factories; and there is many a way of earning when one gets down to the level world. You used to play the zither, and sing a song."

"That is long ago," I said, "and the zither is buried with my father. I fear that all my music is buried with it."

"At your age the music is not hushed so quickly," she said, kindly, and pulled an old zither down from a shelf. "It used to be sweet enough," she added; "take it with my blessing." At least it may cheer your way if it puts no money in your purse. And the village shall see to your Niccolo: though it must be owned he is an imp."

So I resolved to go down to the level world, to work at the silks of Como, or at anything I could find to do. The zither was to go with me, and Niccolo was to stay at the village, till such time as I should have money to come back and fetch him.

I took my zither on my shoulder, and a wallet in my hand, and, committing myself to God, I set out on my lonely way. Niccolo limped along with me half a mile; and when we found he could go no further, we stopped on the lonely road for a last embrace. The poor lad had always loved me dearly, and his spirit was quite broken now, and he clung to me with cries. It was a moment of the cruellest anguish when I had to push him at last away from me, and to hurry away. I heard his sobs behind me for a long way as I went, and later fancied I could hear them still, in the rush of the falling river, and the faint wail of the pines.

I had passed two pretty villages along my way, and the sun had already set when I reached the third. There was a glare behind the mountains, and a warm golden haze floated in the vale. The houses came down a hill and the streets were flights of steps. Far above the roofs, and out of the chestnut-trees, rose the burning brazen cap of the campanile, and the bell was sounding lazily, as if ringing itself to sleep. The pines I had left behind me, in fringe of olive and purple, on the dusky heights: and here there were only the heavily-laden fruit-trees, chestnuts drooping over my shoulder, cherries dropping into my mouth, walnuts lining the roadside, and fig-bushes thrust in my path. Vines ran over the walls and upon the crimsoned roofs, and clusters of ripened grapes hung in at the

doors and windows. A cloud of silvery smoke had blent with the haze of the sunset, and there was a smell as of burning logs and fragrant food.

The next day I passed through still more villages, and got down to the flush and bloom of the Lombard plains. The mountains here became walls of a gigantic garden, vines wrapped their terraces, and melons ripened in the meadows in the midst of the corn. Plums were as lumps of gold, and the peaches glowed in the fruit-gatherer's basket, while nectarines and apricots added perfume to the coloured air. Great rows of mulberry-trees reminded me now of the silk works, and the grasshoppers sang so loud that I took them for birds.

I got on board a small sailing vessel that plied upon the lake, earning my fare by a little music, and went singing down to Como, weary, travel-soiled, and with blisters on my feet. I fell asleep in the middle of my songs, and was gently shaken awake again by the captain's merry wife. She wore a white-and-scarlet head-dress, and a large cross of gold, and crushed grapes out of a basket into her baby's laughing mouth. The gaiety here on the lake was a thing to make one stare: boats with scarlet cushions, ladies in lace mantillas, boatmen with dazzling shirts and brilliant sashes. The lake glowed with the most exquisite bluish green, and out of it rose the palaces, with terraces climbing the heights. We passed towns like straggling castles, whose streets were ladders of stone creeping up from the water; and all these wonderful novelties were to me a fantastic dream.

Giulia, the captain's wife, found me a lodging in the town of Como, a closet under a chimney, beside the room where she and her husband had their home. In order to reach this nest, I had to climb a hundred steps, which wound in and out of the houses up to the roofs. Noises roused me by three o'clock in the morning, wheels rolling, voices shouting, tambourines ringing, besides the sound of many novel kinds of music. I brushed up my dusty clothes, and went out to look at the town. The people were holding their market in the piazza of the Duomo, and tables were there set out, with provisions piled on them lavishly. The shops under the loggie were already all alive, and deep amber curtains fluttered gaily out of the arches. Flowers teemed from the dark and crooked balconies overhead, which hung like crazy cages from the upper windows. Colours were flashing everywhere; from brilliant oleander blossoms hanging like living flames in the air;

from the gay dresses of the people, the piles of monster melons, the red marbles of the Broletto, and the Duomo's deeper hues.

I lifted the heavy curtain, and went into the Duomo; the mass was over, and most of the people were gone; but others kept pouring in, and the place was full. Somebody touched me on the shoulder, and I looked up with a start. Here was Placido, in the dress of a boatman!

"Netta!" he whispered, excitedly. His face was flushed, and there were tears in his eyes.

"Oh, Placido Lorez!" I cried, and gave him both my hands.

We sat on a bench and whispered in a shady corner of the church. Each had a story to tell, and each had a ready listener.

"My father is dead, Placido," I said, "and Niccolo is hurt in the Alps. I have come down here to Como to try and earn money at the silk. That is my whole story: so life is sad enough."

"I guessed it was so," said Placido. "I knew how it must be with you when I saw you crying at the mass. As for me, I have travelled far. I have stored crops and driven oxen, and helped with the vines in the south. For some months I have been a boatman here on the lake; and yesterday I had it in mind to return to the Alps. But now I believe I'll wait a bit. There's never good in haste."

"There is a captain's wife who is good to me," I said, it being now my turn again; "and she says I shall earn money by singing, for the people here in the plains are as fond of music as ourselves. I sing better than I used to do, and your mother has given me her zither."

"Little Netta!" he said, "I have made a good bit of money, and I don't like to think that you must work. I can't forget the day when you declared you could not love me, but maybe if you were to try you might change your mind. It's not that I am much to care for, but the love in my heart is strong. Who knows but that, after all, I could make you happy!"

"Placido," I said, "you are a kind man, but as I refused to marry you before when I had got a home, so I will not accept you now, because I am in need of one."

"I would not bribe you with anything but just my love," he answered, mournfully. "So if it cannot be, it can't, and I will not vex you. You must at least let me be your friend, however."

"My best friend," I said; and after that we walked hand in hand about the church, Placido showing me the pictures, and ex-

plaining what they meant, and telling me the touching stories that are painted in the jewelled windows.

The captain's wife befriended me, and people liked my music, and I could earn more money with my zither than in the factories. The people would gather round me, asking each for his favourite song, and my story got whispered among them, and they were kinder than I could tell. "She sings for a helpless brother," they said, and fees were therefore doubled as they dropped in my lap. Great people also would send for me now from their villas; and I began to save a little money.

I had to sing one evening at a palace on the lake, and it was dark when I took my seat in the verandah. The lake glittered with moonlight, and all along the terraces hung dimly-coloured lamps. A crowd of gay figures had gathered on the marble steps that led into the water. When I sang every one listened; when I ceased, I was forgotten; save that somebody went to a table and fetched me wine.

I looked up to thank this somebody, and saw the Signor John.

"Little Netta!" he exclaimed, amazed.

"Can it be possible that this is you?"

"Yes, signor," I said.

"Tell me how it has happened," he asked. "What can have fetched you down out of the snows to Como?"

"My father is killed by the avalanche," I said, "and I am earning money for Niccolo, who is hurt in the Alps. It is now time for me to go, signor; good-bye!"

"Stay, I am going with you!" he said, and followed me out on the hill, carrying my zither.

"Sit down here and rest," he said, when we had gone a little way.

"But I have still to get to Como," I said, "and I want to rest in my bed."

"That is true," said the signor, smiling. "Let us then take a boat at once!"

I looked up the water, and assured myself that Placido was nowhere waiting for me. I stepped into the signor's boat, and went floating with him down the moonlit lake.

"How beautiful you have grown, Netta!" said the signor as we went. "Did I not tell you that you would be a woman when we should meet again?"

I gravely shook my head. I remembered that he had not come back, even to see if I were alive.

"You have also grown prim and cold," he added presently. "Indeed, you are so changed that I wonder how I knew you."

"It is only that one cannot always be a child," I said, sadly; and he lifted me out of the boat, and brought me to the foot of the staircase which led up to my nest in the roof. When I peered down from the top I saw him still looking up. I looked then into the glass at the face which the Signor John had called so beautiful.

"Placido never told me that I was beautiful," I reflected.

III.

AFTER that I saw the signor every day. I had long walks on the hills with him, and many a pleasant hour on the moonlit lake. He used to meet me at the Duomo, so that I could not think of my prayers; and Giulia began to tease me, calling me a noble English dame.

"You'll not forget me and baby," she said. "You'll send us a present from England;" and I had already considered in secret about what I should send her.

I thought I should be extremely happy were it not for Placido Lorez: but his face was always before me, and his eyes had got grave and sad. His sadness troubled me so much that I tried to keep out of his way, and he soon saw that I avoided him, and was careful not to annoy me. Once when I went out on the lake with the Signor John, it happened that Placido's boat was the boat he hired. Not till I was fairly seated did I see the boatman.

Placido picked up his oars, and took his seat so that he could not see me; and never spoke a word nor moved his head. His oars dipped in the lake and scattered the shining water to right and left; but except for this sign of life he might have been taken for a man of stone. He did not even glance at me as I passed him out of the boat, but his downcast face haunted me all that night.

The next day I was tripping along by the boats on the verge of the lake; my zither perched on my shoulder, and flowers blooming in my breast; rare bright flowers, sent me that morning by the Signor John. It was far in the afternoon, when there is a glitter about the place, such a burning of colour and flashing of water, such a glow and dazzle overhead and underfoot, that sometimes one can hardly see one's way. The boats look all the same, with their crimson cushions, and with the dash, as of ink, in the water, under the side that is against the sun. The boatmen's white shirts make them also one like another, though none were so tall as Placido, nor so quiet, nor yet so strong. This time I did

not see him, however, till he put himself right in my way.

"Netta! I want to speak to you."

"Make haste then!" I said, gaily.

Placido took my hand and made me sit on the side of his boat. Before this I had rather believed in his strength than known it.

He looked at me, straight in the face, with a long wistful gaze. "You are going to meet the signor?" he said.

"Yes."

"Netta, has he asked you to be his wife?"

I said, "Not yet, Placido;" and I began to get angry.

"Netta, do you think you love him?"

I hung my head and blushed, which might mean anything.

"Dear!" he said, "you need not be angry, but you must listen to me. Gentlemen seldom marry peasant girls, though it may charm them to walk and sail with one like you. And you have yourself to look to. Don't think me selfish, for I have no wish on earth, if it be not to see you happy. If I could have made you happy, I would have done it; but as that is not to be—by Heaven I'll see that no one shall make you wretched!"

"I am not so easily made wretched," I said, haughtily.

Placido looked at me tenderly for a moment, and then turned away his face.

"Wicked tongues can break the purest heart," he said, softly.

I looked at him in great amazement, and then I blushed: my face blushed, and my ears, my throat, and my naked arms: and then the blood seemed to freeze within me, and my pulses got cold and still. I did not speak for a minute, but gazed on the ground and thought.

"Placido, you may look at me now," I said, presently, "for I am only going to thank you."

Then I turned and left him, and went my way. I did not flaunt so gaily, nor trip so lightly as usual. The pain in Placido's face had given me a shock.

The signor was already waiting for me up in the hills; it being now a matter of course that I should meet him there in the evenings, when we would watch the sun set redly behind the vineyards; while he talked to me all about England, and of his home where my pretty portrait now hung on the wall. I had believed that he always thought of me as future mistress of this honoured home: never thinking at all of the gulf between us. Now I sat by him silently looking down on the shining lake.

"Netta," he said, "what ails you?"

"I have been thinking of how I can tell you that I must not come here again," I said.

"Must not come here again!" he echoed.

"Who has the right to prevent you?"

"Only my own will," I answered.

"Then that must bend to mine," he said, smiling, "for I cannot live without you."

A lump rose up in my throat, but I choked it down.

"Signor," I said, sadly, "I am an ignorant girl from the mountains, while you—you know the world. You might have been kinder."

He glanced quickly at my face; his brow suddenly reddened, and he turned his head away from me. So had Placido looked when he feared to pain me; only Placido had nothing to blush for: the blush had been left for me.

"There is no need to be vexed," I said, "and I did not mean to hurt you. I am going back to the town now. I shall always be proud of your friendship, Signor John."

I waited a minute patiently, but he did not move his head. I did not see any reason why I should wait or speak to him again, so I turned away, and began walking towards the town.

I heard his steps coming behind me.

"Netta!" he called.

"Well?" I said.

"Netta, will you be my wife?"

I felt a great shock of triumph. He had really said the words, and I could tell Placido; and yet somehow all the gladness had gone out of my heart. In an hour my life was changed; yet I did not know it.

I said "Yes," slowly, for I thought I loved him, and I remembered that he was a noble signor, and that in this he was very good. Placido had said truly that lords do not marry peasants; and the signor had made a sacrifice in order to win my hand. I knew that I ought to be proud of it, and yet somehow I felt ashamed. I could not forget his face when he had turned it away from me, nor the struggle which I had then witnessed, nor the wound that had been given to my pride. Surely I might be content, I thought, yet I wept that whole night through; I thought I had been a great deal happier when alone on the Alpine paths.

The signor brought me gifts; a chain for my neck, and trinkets for my ears, and a ring for my fingers, as pledge of troth. Never was a more generous lover than the Signor John. The evening after I

received them I decked myself in the jewels, and ran out into the twilight to bring my news to Placido. This friend had been away at Colico since early dawn, and I watched for his coming back from my little window up in the roof. His boat pulled into the harbour just after sunset.

"Oh, Netta! is it you?" he cried, and sprang eagerly to the beach.

I shook my head at him laughingly, and the dying flare of the sun blazed on my jewels.

"Placido, I have come to tell you about it: I am to be married this day week!"

Placido bent his head: "I thank God for your welfare," he said.

I bit my lips cruelly, and the tears sprang to my eyes. I had thought that he might have been just a little grieved.

"It is wonderful," I said, "how friends can be glad to lose one."

Placido looked at me in wonder. His face was deadly pale, and he appeared to be very tired, or to have lately suffered. Somehow I could not be satisfied, though I had come out here to triumph over him. He had thought I could be treated lightly, and I had shown him his fears were vain. He had thanked God for my happiness; and that was all.

He began now to speak cheerfully, seeing that clouds had gathered on my face.

"So you are going to be a noble lady!" he said, "in some splendid place beyond seas. Maybe in the course of years you will come back to Como."

I did not believe a word of it; it seemed all a lying tale. It was like the stories told out of the curling smoke when the logs are burning in the Alps. I stood upon a heap of sails, with my foot on the edge of the boat, my jewels flashing as the boat swayed, and my eyes on the west where the light was fading. Yes, yes, I was to be a noble lady, and to live in a foreign country with the Signor John, and there would be a very vast difference, in the days that were still to come, between me up in my high place and Placido plying his boat on the lake.

The light faded away, and the water lapped darkly at the side of the boat. My jewels ceased to flash, and there was a long, long silence, which Placido broke.

"And Niccolo?" he asked, abruptly, as if following out some train of thought.

I gave a sudden violent start, and stared at him blankly. In the midst of my excitement I had forgotten Niccolo. In arranging for my own welfare I had let my poor helpless brother slip out of my thoughts.

"The signor will take care of him," I muttered; "I will take him with me to England."

"Your signor is a generous man," returned Placido; and then I bade him good-night, and went up to my nest to think.

I sat on my bed in the dark, tossing my twinkling jewels about in my lap. The signor had gone to a ball at one of the palaces on the lake; he was dancing even at this moment with the ladies who were quite his equals, yet whom he had not found so lovable as simple me. Ah, for the sake of my love, would he be good to Niccolo? It seemed to me, as I sat there in the depths of my sore remorse, that there was no one half so dear to me as that lone, helpless creature whom people disliked and called the imp: I had promised to come back for my brother, and I vowed I would keep my word.

Next day I was earlier than I need have been at the familiar seat on the hill.

"Signor," I said, as soon as he was seated beside me.

"You must not call me 'signor,' Netta."

"Ah, I always forget. You remember my brother Niccolo?"

The signor's face clouded. "I do remember him well," he said.

"He is waiting till I return for him, up in the Alps."

"He must wait a long time, then, Netta, if you are coming with me."

"Signor!" I said, "can we not bring Niccolo with us?"

He laughed a low laugh. He did not mean to be unkind, I think; it was only that he felt amused.

"No, Netta; indeed we could not take him."

"He has no one at all but me," I said, speaking low, holding my breath.

"He must learn to do without you, then. Once for all, my pretty one, you must leave your friends behind you; though you can still provide for your brother—getting some one to take good care of him up in the mountains."

"No one loves Niccolo," I muttered, reflectively.

"Therefore you need not think me cruel," said the signor.

"Therefore I cannot leave him," I whispered.

The signor began to look angry.

"Netta!" he said, "you talk like a spoiled child. You must try to forget Italy, and that is the plain truth. It will be quite hard enough upon me——" Here he stopped.

"Yes?" I said, looking at him. "Tell me what will be hard."

"Nothing," he said, smiling again; "nothing that will not be set right when you have been a year in England."

"And have quite forgotten Italy?"

"And have almost forgotten Italy. And now, since that is settled, my Netta, tell me what you will have for a wedding gift?"

"Signor," I said, "you have already given me too much. You have, indeed, been very good to me—that I cannot forget."

"Tush, Netta! what is the matter with you?" he said. "I will give you anything you like."

I sat silent again, looking out over the water. In the distance some elegant ladies were embarking from their marble staircase. Away at the bottom of the lake towered the azure walls of the Alps, and away, further still, folded up somewhere in their royal purple, sat my sad crippled brother, my poor peevish lad, whom nobody, save myself, would ever love. Yonder, with the dainty ladies, was the place for the Signor John; mine was in the Alps, with Niccolo.

"Signor," I said at last, "I am an ignorant girl, but I have been lately thinking more than you would believe. I acknowledge that it was generous of you to ask me to be your wife, and that my love would not be worth to you all the trouble it must cost. Like should mate with like, and you and I are unlike; yet I should hardly have dared to speak had it not been for Niccolo."

The signor looked at me in amazement.

"You mean that you want to be free again, Netta."

"Yes," I said, "if you please."

"You mean to give up everything for Niccolo!"

"To-morrow I shall be on the Alps, going back for him," I said.

"Netta, you shall not jilt me!"

"No, Signor John, that would, indeed, be too saucy. You shall jilt me, if you like it better."

"This is very fine," he said, "but I shall alter your way of thinking!"

"In the mean time say good-bye, signor, for I shall not see you to-morrow."

"Good-bye, Netta, for the present."

"Good-bye, Signor John, and may God be with you!"

He had caught both my hands, as if he would not let me go; but I twisted them from him suddenly, and went running down the hill and out of his sight.

I packed up my jewels, and sent them back to their owner, who had been generous enough to give them, as though I had been fit to be his wife. My good Giulia carried them, after mourning over them for an hour, and early on the following day I went out to look for Placido.

"I've come to say good-bye, Placido. I'm off now to the Alps."

"The Alps!" cried Placido, wonderingly.

"For Niccolo," I said, brightly. "We are not going to England though. The signor is going alone."

Placido sprang from his boat with a radiant face.

"Ah, Netta! is it truth? But you shall not travel alone."

"Of course I shall travel alone. I did it before with a sadder heart."

"I am going to see my mother," said Placido. "I hope you will not object."

"Why should I object?" I said. "Your mother will be glad to see you."

"As glad as your Niccolo to see you."

"I'll take care to tell her you are coming," I said.

"You think, then, that you are likely to out-walk me?"

"What! do you mean to say that you are coming with me now?"

"I mean to be your fellow-traveller," he said, "unless you tell me truly that you would rather be alone."

I could not say that I would rather go alone, so we made our journey together back to the Alps. As we went along Placido told me much of his former journeys, and what grief he had suffered, and what dreary things he had said to himself; and I knew well that his misery had been because I could not love him. As for me, I confessed my carelessness with regard to Niccolo, and my feelings towards the English signor, which had been all made up of pride; and Placido tried to excuse me a little, and promised not to think ill of me. It was much happier travelling with him than wandering quite alone, and by the time we got near his village I was grieved that the journey was past.

We sat upon two large pine-stumps then, and looked at each other gravely. Another wind of the road would bring us within sight of friends. I had felt a strange joy in being alone in the world with Placido, and I knew by Placido's face that he liked taking care of me.

"Netta," said Placido, simply, "will you be my wife at last?"

"I wonder you ask me again," I said;

"but it would cost me far too dear to refuse you now."

So it happened that we were married in his village church, with his mother and my Niccolo, besides many friends, around us. And now we are again at Como; Niccolo, who has got stronger, is carving figures under our trees, while grandmother teaches our child to touch the zither. And Placido is not a boatman now; we live in our own vineyard, where the Signor John has been to see us, bringing his charming English bride.

As Arthur Stacey read these last words, he laid down the manuscript and looked around him. The candles were beginning to flicker in their sockets, and the end of the room was already in darkness. The wind was blowing pretty stiffly outside, and the roar of the Atlantic was more distinct than he had heard it since his arrival at Valentia. Nevertheless, Arthur thought that a turn in the fresh air would do him good; so, donning his thick coat, and ordering fresh candles to be lit ready for his return, he sallied forth and faced the storm.

Naturally enough, as it seemed to him, he turned his steps toward the office, with the intention of availing himself of the permission which had been accorded him of seeing the Slaves at work. Mr. Gay was in his room as Arthur entered the hall, and the door being open, he looked up, and, pushing aside the papers over which he had been poring, accompanied the visitor into the temple of the Lamp.

There it was, ever burning brightly, and ever assiduously watched. They stood behind, the Slave sitting, as usual, with his eyes intent on the paper screen, but the spot of light remained steady and motionless. Scarcely, however, had they turned aside to chat at the fireplace when their attention was attracted by the movement of the light, now to the left, now to the right of the centre line, and by the Slave's saying:

"New York tells Heart's Content that an Englishman named Cameron, who says he is a friend of Mr. Gay's, is in their office, talking to the superintendent. Heart's Content thinks Mr. Gay might like to know this, so sends it on."

"Cameron is probably there about your business, Mr. Stacey," said Mr. Gay, in a low tone. "If you wait here a few minutes I have no doubt we shall have further information."

So Arthur Stacey waited and waited,

but the Lamp revealed nothing that had the smallest interest for him. Incessantly went on the work of the two Slaves, the one reading, the other recording messages of every conceivable kind; messages in French, and German, and English, messages in cipher, messages in brokers' language, to the outer world as unintelligible as cipher, domestic messages, diplomatic messages, and messages of life and death; but to Arthur Stacey the Lamp spoke no more. Tired of waiting for further news from Cameron, after a short time Arthur Stacey bade Mr. Gay good-night, taking with him the superintendent's promise that any message in which he was interested should be at once conveyed to him.

He had intended to go to bed on his return, but the thought that there might be news from Stewart Cameron had put all such ideas to flight. He must be up to hear it when it came, and he must divert his mind until it did come; so he mixed himself a smoking tumbler of whisky-punch, pulled the fresh-lighted candles towards him, and commenced the perusal of the next manuscript, which bore the strange title of—

THE LAST TENANTS OF HANGMAN'S HOUSE.

THEY came no one knew whence, and they lived no one knew how; for though she was evidently a lady born and bred, and more delicate than most, yet they had no servant but Molly Hartland, the shock-headed "maid" of old Jem living in the mud cottage under the cliff; and she went only by chance times, and not for long together; she never stayed a night in the house, nor saw more of it than the kitchen where she did her "chores" in her rough way, and then left. They had come quite suddenly one wild October night, and had taken possession of Hangman's House—a dilapidated old place, which had got its name from one of its former possessors, who, suspected of treachery by his comrades, had been hunted like a rat and caught in the loft, and his body left hanging on an improvised gallows out of the window. Since then it had earned but evil repute, now for smugglers, now for spectres; with darker tales still of belated travellers or shipwrecked men who had been seen to go in, but never to come out; for all those terrible half-mythic crimes which are sure to centre in a long disused house standing desolate on a wild coast. And there these latest tenants had lived ever since their arrival, a year or so ago now, buying nothing but

such food as was absolutely necessary; and sometimes having Molly to do such work as the lady was physically incapable of doing. They had no visitors; they never received a letter; they called themselves Capstone, and were man and wife, though they looked more like father and daughter. For he was a good twenty years older than she, and she seemed to have more fear of him than goes with wifely love of the right sort.

He was a tall, lean man, with sloping shoulders, a hatchet face, sucked-in leathery cheeks, and a large hooked nose like the beak of a bird of prey; his eyes were small and of a fiery red, sunk deep beneath heavy brows, the coarse light hairs of which fell over them like the thatch of a pent-house; his thin lips were set into a perpetual snile, more subtle than the most open sneer; his straw-coloured hair hung evenly all round from the centre of his head; and his long and bony hands had curved fingers and pointed nails, which, to carry the resemblance still further, were also like the talons of a bird of prey. His manner, when by chance he spoke to any one—and always to his wife—was of exquisite politeness; but Lilian had learned to dread his politeness more than his wrath. Indeed it was his wrath; for the more anger he felt the more suavely he showed, and the more cruelty he practised.

For the wife herself, poor Lilian, she was just such a one as is doomed by nature to be a victim. With very little judgment, and of varying mood, being sometimes timid to abjectness, and at others bold to rashness, never seeing when to yield or when to oppose, and her opposition always ending in tears and obedience, she was all that such a man as her husband could desire in his creature. And as all he needed was a creature, not a companion, he was well enough suited, with one whom he might use as he would without any fear of enduring resistance. Without any fear either of untoward protection; for Lilian was an orphan, and her only brother had gone away to sea many years ago now, and had never since been heard of. So, if not dead, he was as good as dead; and as, for sufficient reasons, Mr. Capstone had covered up all traces of his removal to Cornwall, there was not much chance, if ever Fred should turn up again, of his finding his sister under another name and in such a place as Hangman's House, out by Michael's Run. Wherefore, the lean man with the hooked nose and the curved fingers wrought his will, unchecked by the fear of God or the law of man.

Mr. Capstone had been about a year at Hangman's House, and the rough October weather had come round again, when a cry went up that a ship, caught between the two headlands, was drifting into the bay. The tide was running high, and a strong west wind was blowing straight in shore; black and Titanic rose the sharp and broken line of cliffs; long reefs, sunken, treacherous, ran far into the sea; while here and there huge rocks reared themselves out from the foam, like savage sentinels, barring all ingress into a bay as threatening, fierce, and deadly as themselves. It was a coast where was no mercy for any wandering boat, no way of escape for any drowning man; it was the cruellest bit of coast in all that cruel line, and it had cost more lives than any other spot; it was the terror of every seaman who had to pass that way, and the current set so strong in shore that ships steered far out to sea, and a sail was scarcely ever seen on the horizon. When it did appear it was mostly for doom.

On came the ship, blown right out of her course, her helm useless, her smaller spars gone, caught by the wind and the tide, and driven madly in shore. Already she had lost some of her men, washed overboard; but some were still left, whom the watchers on the cliffs could see, lashed to the rigging. The whole district had collected on the cliffs. The two coast-guards nearest at hand, and the men who, but for them, would have been wreckers of the old stump, women and children, all were there; some to save and some to spoil; and among them was the lean, lank figure of the tenant of Hangman's House, with his pale wife on his arm.

The ship came drifting on, plunging into the waves and rising out again with a shudder like some creature in agony, flung from reef to reef as the waves lifted her and the wind carried her onward; till at last she came grinding on to the Lion Rock in the middle of the bay. There was no life-boat belonging to Michael's Run, and even if there had been one, she could not have lived in such a sea; but the coast-guards fired a couple of rockets, one of which fell short, and the other struck true. A tall man, who had been holding on gallantly, took the cord. He pushed aside a comrade who seemed to dispute it, and the weaker fell into the sea, while the stronger lashed the cord round him, and gave the signal to pull in shore.

"Good," said Mr. Capstone, applaudingly; "that fellow understands business."

He had no sooner cleared the deck than

the mainmast fell, and in less than two minutes after, the ship fell to pieces like a toy puzzle, and only a mass of broken fire-wood showed where she had been. Not a man on board was saved except the one who had seized the rope and lashed it round him; and he was hauled in, senseless now, close to where the Capstones stood. He was a swarthy man, in the prime of life; that was all Lilian saw: when her husband, touching him lightly with his foot, turned to Molly Hartland and said, "Here, Molly, the sea has brought you a lover. Take him to my house, you fellows; I'll have him."

"Be advised, sir," put in Molly's father, old Jem, "there's no good in taking a man into your house as is washed up from the sea.

Save a stranger from the sea,
And he'll turn your enemy.

That's what we say hereaway, sir, and there's the story of Cruel Coppinger to bear us out."

But Mr. Capstone only laughed till his red eyes were nearly lost behind the straw-coloured thatch above them, as he answered, turning his back on Jem, "I'll dare the saying, my man. Here, fellows! haul him along to Hangman's House; we'll soon bring him to his senses again; and I'll give you a sovereign to drink his health and hurt your own."

The shipwrecked man was a magnificent fellow to look at, tall, dark, and powerfully built, with a face absolutely faultless for manly beauty, and yet a face at which women would involuntarily shudder, and which no man would like to trust; a face which, speechless and lifeless as the man was, marked a nature at once desperate and resolute, bold, lawless, and determined. He was not the kind of man of whom a creature could be made, thought Lilian; what then did her husband want with him? She, who knew the guilty secret of their lives, knew also the necessity of keeping prying eyes out of it. What could they do with a man like this castaway admitted among the crimes that had to be hidden? Or was the guilt to be passed on to another? at once shared and multiplied?

Reckless of the consequences so sure to follow on her opposition, Lilian turned to her husband with a shuddering appeal.

"Do not take this man into the house!" she said, earnestly. "Hear me for once—do not."

"What, my love, after all my lessons?" said Mr. Capstone, with a smile, taking her arm with a caressing gesture.

The pale fair woman shrunk away,

blenched, and put up her left hand to wipe away the drops that started on her upper lip; but she said no more; and they both turned away from the crowd, none of whom saw the blood that trickled down her arm. At night, when she took off her gown, there were four sharp cuts where her husband had clasped her arm so affectionately, and dug his talons into her flesh.

For such a turbulent-looking man, it was wonderful how easily this castaway slipped into his place in the dull life at Hangman's House. No one could have been more tractable, or apparently more contented; and Mr. Capstone daily congratulated himself on the good luck which had cast his guest up in Mr. bael's Run. He was no common sailor with hard and horny hands; he was a Spanish artist, a man accustomed to engrave on metal, and he had some knowledge of chemicals and casting. And as Mr. Capstone could speak Spanish, and Lilian could not, and as Manuel, as he called himself, could not speak English, he was no restraint on any one. The two men talked as they pleased without betraying to the woman what they wished to keep secret; and Mr. Capstone said what he would to Lilian, and threatened her with his polite air and affectionate smile, without the fact of Manuel's sitting there at the bench, engraving, being any check on him.

From the first Manuel superseded Lilian in the work she had been accustomed to do for her husband. He knew what he was about; better even than Mr. Capstone himself; and so was of more use than the nervous, uncertain, hysterical little wife; and one day, when he had specially pleased his employer, Mr. Capstone turned round to Lilian sitting idly crouched over the fire, saying, with a smile:

"My love, I begin to find you insupportable. My ruffian here can do all that you did, and ten times more; and it irritates me to see your pale sickly face, and those idle hands doing nothing. I must find employment for my own, my dear, if yours are so useless; and—get rid of you altogether."

And when he said this, he bent his face to hers, as if to kiss her, with an expression in his eyes that froze her very blood.

He was standing with his back to Manuel, and Lilian had turned her face towards him. Suddenly she saw the Spaniard's eyes fixed on her. As a rule he never looked at her; seemed to be hardly aware of her existence; save with

the most curt formality of politeness took no notice of her; but now, when she caught his black eyes fixed upon her, she saw before her the chance of another peril, almost worse than those already surrounding her. She would have rather read the deadliest hatred in those flaming eyes than what she did read. And so audaciously expressed, too! It was almost as if he had known what Mr. Capstone had said, and had invited her to take refuge in his love against the persecution of her husband.

Frightened Lilian, making some kind of muttered excuse, rose and left the room; running down-stairs into the kitchen, which until then had been her own poor sanctuary. She was standing there by the fireplace, all trembling, when the door quietly opened and Manuel stole in with a noiseless step. It was rare that Mr. Capstone left him a moment alone. Under one pretext or another he kept him always by his side.

Lilian's heart stood still for terror when she saw who it was that thus stole into her darkness. He came up to her, swift, stealthy, noiseless as a panther, his eyes flaming, his bronzed face instinct with passion; and when he was near her he caught her in his arms like a wild beast springing on its prey. Her fair hair broke loose and fell in long, soft waves over her face and breast; he kissed her hair, and he kissed the pale face greedily, roughly, harshly.

"I love you," he said in perfectly good English; "I will protect you, for I will kill him, and then you shall be mine."

"Good Heavens!" cried Lilian, shrinking from him; but he held her tight. "You are an Englishman!"

"I am nothing but the man who loves you," said Manuel, kissing her again; she would rather he had stabbed her.

"He must know!" she cried.

"If you betray me I will kill both him and you," said Manuel, coolly. "Don't be a fool, pretty Lilian; you are one, but I love you nevertheless. I have given you my secret; I know you can keep secrets; but, by all the saints in heaven, if you betray me, you shall repent it! I love you, my pale Lily, but I am not so mad as to put my life in peril for you. If one of us has to go, it shall be you; but it shall be neither. Another kiss. Peste! You refuse? Then I will take it. Adios, little girl. You are mine remember, and I will kill him for you; but, silence! else——!" And, with a peculiar gesture, Manuel dropped her into a chair, and glided from the kitchen as noiselessly as he had entered it.

So now Lilian had a secret to keep from her husband, as she had had his to keep from others through all those painful years.

The work went on, and went on well.

"That fool of a Spaniard is putting his neck into a fine noose," said Mr. Capstone to his wife, smiling across to Manuel as he took up his last plate, and examined it microscopically; Manuel taking no heed of his words, but quietly resting his head on his hand, while he looked at his employer patiently.

Still smiling, and in the same voice, Mr. Capstone continued in Spanish:

"My good Manuel, you are invaluable. You shall share like my brother; you are my more than brother—friend!"

On which Manuel smiled too, sedately, and replied that if his preserver and benefactor was pleased, all was well.

"When I have got what I want from him," said Mr. Capstone in English, with the most affectionate look and accent towards the Spaniard, "I shall give him up to the police, or get rid of him in some other way. He must be a fool to think I would trust him! I was saying, my friend," he went on, in Spanish this time, "that you have been a very treasure to me, and that I can never be too grateful for the work you have done. Courage! a few days more, and it will be completed!"

"Good!" said Manuel, quietly.

Lilian stood quivering in every limb. True, she loved neither of these men, but she feared for fear's sake, if not for love's. And then she herself was so desperately involved on all sides; but worst of all by her knowledge of Manuel's secret, and his cognisance of how much her husband was betraying him. What a nest of crime it all was! There was not one wholesome part in it.

After repeated trials, at last a perfect plate was produced. The imitation was not to be detected by the keenest expert living: for had not the clever thief and forger got some of the Bank paper? and was he not, therefore, master of the situation? His false gold, too, was to the hair's-breadth of balance. To be sure he could not counterfeit the ring; but, save the ring, all was right: and with the paper he could make play securely.

"And now," said Mr. Capstone, expanding his narrow chest, as the three were assembled round the fire on the evening of the day of success: "to leave this old rat's castle and enjoy life afresh!"

"Afresh!" said Lilian, with a weak kind of scorn.

"Would you think it afresh if I were to efface myself, and give you up to this black-headed ruffian?" asked Mr. Capstone, smiling, and putting his head on one side amiably.

"Hush! For God's sake do not say such things!" cried Lilian, turning paler than usual. Then she flushed to the very roots of her hair, and her husband looked at her curiously.

"He is a good-looking ruffian enough," he said, blandly. "Shall I make you over to him?"

"I will leave the room if you talk so," said Lilian, angrily; and she rose from her chair. But he laid his curved fingers on her arm.

"You will do nothing of the kind, my lady," he said. "You will wait for as long as I choose, and you shall hear what I choose. I begin to suspect you. Aha! Have you been looking over the fence, my lady?—making eyes, hey? thinking of handsome ruffians o' nights? This must be seen to. You and he together. By the Lord, but you'll smart for it! The score is running, upon my soul it is. No matter. I can pay it."

Lilian saw the Spaniard's face.

"Let me go," she said, faintly. "Oh God! let me go."

"My love, you are inconvenient," said her husband, pushing her down in her chair, while he played with her long hair. "Sit where you are, and be good company. It is an auspicious time; let us celebrate it."

The black December night was sharp and keen. The moon had not yet risen, and the sky was overcast with heavy clouds. Not a star shone above, not a light twinkled below; the whole land and sea, and heaven together, gave not the faintest sign of life; only a cruel wind, whistling through the crannies, and blustering round the house, fierce as on the day when Manuel was cast up from the sea.

"A glass of wine, for the good result of the day," then said Mr. Capstone, with sudden vivacity, rising, and taking glasses and a bottle from a locked cupboard in the room.

During all their late talk Manuel had been sitting in a lounging, careless manner, his legs stretched out, his hands folded in each other, his chin on his breast, apparently half asleep. The firelight flickered on his face, and Lilian saw just one narrow glittering line beneath his eyelids, which showed that he was awake, and watching. Mr. Capstone was, for him, somewhat slow

and clumsy at that cupboard. He drew the cork of the bottle, and they heard him drink and smack his lips.

"The primest port that was ever grown," he said, enthusiastically. "Here, Manuel, rouse up, my friend, and drink to our joint fortune! There are but two glasses left."

"I won't drink to-night," said Manuel, sleepily. "I am feverish."

"Tut, tut! such wine as this will drive both care and fever away," urged Mr. Capstone. "No fear of that," he added in English.

"I tell you no," said the Spaniard, doggedly. "You English can pour molten lead down your throats. But your vile stuff that you pay your guineas for is hateful to us who know what true wine is. Drink yourself, and let me be."

"As you wish, my friend; I would not press you against your will," said Mr. Capstone, amiably. "That cursed dog, he shall repent this," he said to Lilian, looking kindly at Manuel, as if he were telling her what they had been saying together.

But Manuel took no notice. He still sat stretched out before the fire, looking three parts asleep, and wholly indifferent.

Suddenly he roused himself.

"Let me drink," he said, holding out his hand.

Mr. Capstone gave him the wine with alacrity.

Manuel put it to his lips.

"Pah!" he said, disdainfully. "You call this wine? It is only fit for hogs." And he emptied it into the fireplace.

"Now," he said, "you will let me sleep."

"Ill-mannered hound," said Mr. Capstone, "your tether is nearly out. Here, you pale wretch, drink this," to Lilian, with a smile. "It is too good to waste on such as you, but I am in a jolly good humour to-night, and I will indulge you. That fool there has done the trick, so I don't mind throwing away a glass of wine on you. Here! drink it, I say; and see if you cannot look less like a ghost than you do."

Was Manuel dreaming? As Lilian raised the glass to her lips, he started up, shouting something in Spanish, and flung out his arms, striking the glass, which fell in fragments at his feet.

"Thousand pardons to the señora," he said, rubbing his eyes. "By the saints I was dreaming, and a pretty dream they sent me!"

"Don't mention it," said Mr. Capstone quite amiably. "An accident: who can prevent that?" Then turning to his wife, "Well, my love, you have lost your wine;

your lover's doing, not mine, remember. Never mind, you will sleep soundly enough without it. And now to bed, and—don't wake."

Lilian rose without remonstrance.

"Kiss me," said Mr. Capstone. "Kiss me, Lily," very tenderly.

"No," said Lilian, abruptly, "I will not."

The Spaniard was standing before the fire now, and she saw his hand move into his bosom and clutch at something.

"I wish I had never seen you in my life!" burst out Lilian. "I wish I had died before I had married you."

"Gently, gently, my love, you forget the consequences," said her husband, in a soothing voice. "Don't be so impatient, dear. The ruffian's turn will come perhaps."

Manuel, standing before the fire in a brown study, smiled and nodded to himself, soliloquising. "Yes," he said to himself aloud. "By the saints! yes."

Lilian fled, while Mr. Capstone laughed; but as she turned she met the Spaniard's eyes: just one glance; but that one glance was enough, both for him and for her.

"Pretty little playful kid!" said Mr. Capstone in Spanish, kissing his hand to her as she disappeared; but Manuel did not take up the ball. He only smiled in a quiet kind of amiable approval.

After she had gone the two men fell a-thinking. They were both silent, looking into the fire; both thinking the same thing, and meditating on the best way. At last Mr. Capstone, giving himself a shake as a dog might, reared up his lank lean figure, and looked about him.

"How strange it is," he said, musingly, "the regret one feels when one has come to the last of a thing. Here is the last of this old rat's castle where I have enjoyed such a quiet time of love and happiness with my Lilian—the last night—it oppresses me. I have keen perceptions of beauty, and I have enjoyed the beauty here."

"Where?" asked Manuel, simply.

"On the cliffs. I have a mind to see the old place once more. What say you, my friend?"

"It's a wild night," said the Spaniard, reluctantly. "Dark, is it not?"

"No, the moon is up now. The sea will look grand. Come."

"I don't see the delight," said Manuel, still reluctant.

Mr. Capstone laughed. "Afraid?" he said.

"Afraid, no! But you English are for

weather as for wine; nothing is too strong for you. However, I'll come," and he buttoned up his jacket, but left the middle buttons open, where he could thrust in his hand.

"Thanks—a minute," said Mr. Capstone, as he left the room.

As he left Manuel drew out a dagger and tried its point. "It will settle his business, I think," he muttered, grimly. But he kept a watchful eye on the door while he opened, with a false key, the desk where Mr. Capstone kept that roll of bank paper and the fine steel engraved plates.

Meanwhile the master, in his private room, looked at the chambers of his revolver.

"If necessary, sufficient," was his comment. Then he went up to Lilian's garret door, which he locked, and put the key in his pocket, saying to himself: "The fool! I wished to spare her, and he spoilt my plan. What a curse it is that people will not do as they ought!" All of which he half said, half thought, as he was arranging a lighted candle in a staircase cupboard filled with tarred rope, shavings, and the like. Then he went down-stairs, humming an opera tune gaily.

"For our last walk!" he said, airily.

"Yes, for our last," repeated Manuel, quietly.

They took the way of the cliffs right over the Ganger's Path, where once, it was said, Coppinger had got an over-brave and zealous ganger in his boat, had laid his head on the gunwale, and had deliberately chopped it off with a hatchet. It was a wild place, where the cliffs had split asunder, leaving a chasm as clean, and black, and smooth as if it had been scooped out by a knife. By this time the wind had fallen, and the moon had come out, so that the chasm yawning at their feet was distinctly visible. The two men walked in an even line together, each careful not to give the other half a foot's pace in advance. Manuel was to the right, and had taken Mr. Capstone's arm, thus leaving his own right arm free, the hand thrust into his breast. But then he had only a dagger, and the other might use a revolver with his left hand to advantage.

"Peste!" cried Mr. Capstone, stopping suddenly on the very edge of the chasm, and hastily withdrawing his arm.

In an instant Manuel had swung him a few steps backwards, and in doing so faced him, and faced Hangman's House. Flames were creeping out of the windows, and the smoke was rising in dense clouds.

"Wretch!" he cried in English, "you have set fire to the house, and left her to be burnt alive!"

"What! a traitor!" exclaimed Mr. Capstone, reeling back, and raising his hand.

The moonlight shone on the barrel of a pistol; there was a click, a flash, a report, and the ball had grazed the Spaniard's cheek; but before the man could fire a second time Manuel had leaped upon him, borne him to the earth, and buried his knife to the hilt in his side.

"And you thought you were deceiving me?" he hissed, as he knelt on the dying man. "You thought you were making a tool of me? getting my neck in a noose, ha! while your own was to go free? Miserable dog! it is I—the black-haired ruffian, who used you; I who have been master throughout, who will have your wife, and your money, and who, up to this last moment, when you thought to throw me down that pit where I will throw you, have played with you, and foiled you!"

"Mercy, mercy!" sobbed the dying man. "My good Manuel, mercy, dear friend—pity!"

"The same mercy that you have had on her!" said the Spaniard, between his teeth.

He raised himself from the bleeding body, met the glassy eyes as they were fixed on him with the yearning look of death and despair; then, laughing harshly, he kicked him over where he lay, and flung him with his foot down the chasm. He heard the heavy fall of the body as it struck against the smooth sides; then a splash in the sea; and all was still.

Swift as an Indian he ran back to the house, just as Lilian appeared at the left window in her white gown, her fair hair streaming over her shoulders; looking, in the moonlight, more like an angel than a woman. The sight of her burnt the Spaniard's heart, and convulsed it with pain. What if he could not save her! He *must* save her; he would; he had vowed that she should be his, and he would keep his vow though the very elements opposed! He rushed into the house, and through the stifling smoke; braving the sly creeping tongues of flame that were licking up the wall. He came to her door, which the fire had not yet touched. Before she had time to realise that it was he whom she had seen crossing the grass in the moonlight, her garret door was flung open, and Manuel, blackened with smoke and crimsoned with blood, had her in his arms.

"Now you are mine!" he said, "I have killed him."

"Heaven protect me!" cried Lilian, covering her eyes with her hands.

"I am better than Heaven," said Manuel, "and I will protect you." He kissed her passionately. "Lilian! Lilian! say that you love me!" he cried. "By the saints, if you do not, I will fling you into the flames and let you perish!"

He lifted her up in his arms, and hers fell round his neck as her hair fell over his face.

"Yes, I love you," she said, and fainted.

Manuel could never tell how he got out of the burning house, with that lifeless woman in his arms. It seemed to him as if nothing could have hurt him; and so, through smoke and fire, he bore the pale fair woman he loved, and laid her on the grass in the quiet moonlight. But when he flung himself down by her, and took her head on his knee, and called to her to look up and thank him by her love for her life, it was more the howl of a wild beast than the cry of a man which burst from his lips. She was dead.

When the neighbourhood was roused, as at last it was, by the news that Hangman's House was all ablaze, they came upon a strange sight. On the grass, some little distance from the house, her long rich silky hair spread smoothly out, her hands laid tenderly across her breast, and a pale December rose placed within them, lay poor Lilian, where the flames could not touch her, nor the falling rafters strike her. Not a trace of the master nor of the stranger was to be found; but some days after there was washed up by the tide the lank lean figure of the man they had known as Mr. Capstone, of Hangman's House, with a gaping knife wound in his side.

Not long after this there flashed into London society a stranger, rich, handsome, reckless, who seemed to have come from the clouds; a stranger whom mothers courted for their daughters, and to whom fathers and brothers gave their honest hands; a stranger who could speak many languages, and who was an accomplished artist, and who had travelled to all parts of the world. But who, when any one by chance spoke of Cornwall, and asked him if he knew that coast, used to aver with some warmth that he did not, and had no wish to know it.

And again, not long ago, a man who might have been that stranger's twin brother, was to be seen at Toulon, wearing

the bullet and the chain, under sentence of hard labour for twenty years, for homicide, where he had not been to blame. But in his indictment of crimes committed on French soil, no mention was made of the body which was washed ashore near Michael's Run in Cornwall, with a knife wound in its side; of the fair-haired woman laid on the grass near the burning ruins of Hangman's House; nor of the forged bank-notes by which that brief and brilliant season of London splendour and Parisian gaiety was maintained. And the man, being a philosopher in his way, used to smile to himself as he pondered on the difference there is between the things which are known and punished in the life of a man, and the things which are concealed and bear no harvest of shame; and how the latter are so frequently the worst of all!

"THAT'S a 'horror,' " said Arthur, as he finished the story, "probably by Grimmer, if he writes up to his name."

The next manuscript, docketed "Something light," was called—

THE HEAVENLY TWINS.

OLD Mr. Blissett's official career was carried on in the City; he was the tenant of chambers in Laurence Pountney-lane. His private life was passed in a comfortable house situate on the eastern side of Tavistock-square. He was by profession a solicitor, and enjoyed an excellent practice. He was reported to be worth a good deal of money. I was one of his articled clerks.

He was a pleasant-looking, clear-complexioned, blue-eyed old gentleman, with a pink bald head, and very white whiskers. He was fond of wearing stiff check cravats and capacious buff waistcoats. A heavy gold-rimmed eye-glass was wont to be suspended round his neck by a ribbon so broad, that it looked almost like a decoration or badge of some rare order of knighthood. His figure inclined to that redundancy of portliness which is yet not accounted uncomely in a man advanced in years. He carried his corpulence, for so it must in truth be described, with ease and dignity, almost with grace.

As a solicitor he prospered, of course, by the litigation of others, but he was himself a man of peaceful nature and friendly disposition. Even to the prejudice of his own interests as a professional man he was given to advising conciliatory measures to his clients. He would constantly intervene in disputed cases to recommend a compromise,

or, as he preferred to phrase it, "an amicable adjustment," involving, naturally, payment of costs. He was altogether a comfortable man to have to deal with, and he had obtained great popularity from a considerable public. He was respected on all hands. The Lord Chancellor returned his bow with peculiar cordiality. With certain of the puisne judges Mr. Blissett was almost on nodding terms. The bar shook hands with him heartily.

That Mr. Blissett was deeply learned in the law, I do not believe. He had entered the profession at a time when it did not stoop to test the acquirements of its members by such inquisitorial processes as "exams" at the Law Institution. He conducted his business on very simple principles. He invariably took counsel's opinion on every case submitted to him. His chambers were provided with a handsome library of law books bound in the regulation sheepskin turned up with crimson; but I never knew him consult one of those portentous volumes, or read anything, indeed, save only his letters and the newspaper. His articled clerks, I can confidently assert, he made no pretence at instructing. I, George Stack, was, as I have said, one of those legal subalterns, or solicitors in embryo. The other was James Sparrow, a young gentleman from the West of England. Mr. Blissett had duly accepted the liberal premiums stated, in our respective articles of clerkship, to be the consideration for his educating us in the mysteries of his profession. But it had seemed to him that he fulfilled his covenants in that respect when he turned us loose in his office, like lambs in a meadow, with liberty to browse as best we might. We were much as the other clerks, except that they were paid for their services, while we paid for the privilege of serving. We were made generally useful and performed multifarious duties. We did much copying, posted letters, carried blue-bags full of papers hither and thither, ran errands, and occasionally served writs. Certainly our official performances were not of a distinguished kind, while the science of our calling was quite a sealed book to us. If we were found, moved by ambitious impulses, snatching a scrap of learning from the pages of Stephen's Blackstone, let us say, Mr. Blissett immediately judged that we were wasting time, and lacked occupation. Forthwith he would hand us an affidavit in Chancery, or some such refreshing document, with instructions to copy it as neatly as might be, in fair engrossing hand, by a given

time. Some degree of legal practice we might by chance acquire in Mr. Blissett's office, but the spirit, philosophy, and history of our profession were things withheld from us as idle, needless, vain, if not, indeed, absolutely deleterious subjects of study.

Once a month, however, Mr. Blissett so far recognised his sense of the value of our premiums, if not of our services, and testified the respect he entertained, if not for us, then for our parents, as to invite us to dinner in Tavistock-square. And very good dinners, I am bound to say, he gave us. He was an admirable host, and he entertained us capitally. True, the happiness we enjoyed was not unleavened by headaches; but we—Jim Sparrow and I—were at a period of life when the penalties incurred by excess of pleasure, or the indiscreet pursuit of enjoyment, are lightly borne. And then if headaches came of the Tavistock-square banquets, there resulted also heartaches—and, upon the principle of homœopathy or of counter-irritation, there seemed good prospect that these two maladies would eventually subdue each other, and leave us, the patients, in tolerably sound condition again.

Our headaches I have sufficiently accounted for. Our heartaches arose thus. Mr. Blissett had two daughters; so of course Sparrow and I fell desperately in love with them. I say "of course," not simply because time out of mind it has been the bounden duty of all apprentices to fall in love with their masters' daughters, but for the further reason, that it seemed to me quite impossible, once having seen the Miss Blissetts, to refrain from yielding to an enduring and all-absorbing passion for them. They were—I am still prepared to maintain—perfectly and bewitchingly lovely. They were twin sisters, and their father's only children. Their sponsors, at their baptism, had named them Eleanor and Elizabeth. These appellations affection had changed or condensed into Nelly and Elly respectively. Their mother was no more. Her place in Mr. Blissett's household was supplied by his sister, a spinster lady of mature years, Miss Columba Blissett. Of this lady it is by no means my desire to speak censoriously. She was, I am persuaded, thoroughly kind-hearted and well-intentioned, strong in her sense of the duty she owed to her nieces. She always held that she was as good as a mother to them. There it seemed to me she overstated her case. A mother is anxiously watchful over the interests and welfare of her young,

but is yet not unprepared to consider the time when they will no longer need her fostering care, but will take flight from the shelter of her wings, and establish independent nests of their own. She will eye their proposed mates judiciously, but will not object to their pairing in due season. I have even heard of mothers who have schemed to expedite the marrying of their offspring. But Miss Columba had quite other views of maternal duties. She protected her charges something too much. She guarded them from evil and from good alike. She warded off lovers from them; she flung cold water, and plenty of it, upon the flames they kindled; she voted admiration folly; love-making preposterous. And thus hindering courtship, she went far to render matrimony impossible.

The love of Sparrow and myself for Elly and Nelly Blissett thus met with difficulties at the very outset. But this was only to be expected, and in the nature of things. Nor was it wholly disagreeable to us. It was as those bitter drinks which, not in themselves very palatable, yet stimulate appetite and give relish to an entertainment.

Our opportunities of meeting the Miss Blissetts were not at first very frequent, being limited mainly to our monthly dinners in Tavistock-square. By-and-bye we ascertained the direction of the young ladies' walks, and notably on Sundays, with an absurd affectation of accident, we met them. They were invariably under the guardianship of Miss Columba; but it was part of our plan to occupy, by turns, the attention of the aunt, and by turns to enjoy the society of the nieces.

I have said that the Miss Blissetts were lovely. I need add little in the way of enhancing this description of them. Their forms were sylph-like; their movements most graceful. Their golden hair fell about them in clouds of spiral ringlets; their complexions were a dazzling combination of milk (country milk) and blush-roses; their eyes a turquoise blue; their lips a coral red; their noses—— But there is something odious about thus attempting to catalogue, with an auctioneer's accuracy, the infinite charms and graces of these divine young ladies. I forbear. I was not a man in possession. They were not taken in execution.

The twin sisters were wonderfully and fatally alike. There was really no saying, with any degree of confidence, which was Elly, which was Nelly, and, as though to defy distinction, they invariably dressed

alike; their favourite colour being a heavenly blue. How Sparrow and I first came to decide that he loved Nelly and that I loved Elly, why I did not rather love Nelly and he Elly, I have difficulty at this distance of time in stating. There was really no choice. Perhaps we left chance—the turn of a halfpenny—to decide for us.

"They really ought to be ear-marked," Sparrow would sometimes say, desperately. (He came from a sheep-breeding district.) But while admitting his own difficulties in the case, he was apt to be acrimonious in charging me with want of perception. He said that I had invaded his rights and transferred my affections from Elly to Nelly. I denied it. I avowed that I adored Elly, that I should never cease to adore her, that she was dearer to me than life itself, and much more to the same effect. "Then why squeeze Nelly's hand as you did last night?" he demanded. He had seen me do it, he added. I maintained that it was Elly's hand that I had squeezed. Sparrow made himself disagreeable. He snorted and tossed his head. We came near to quarrelling outright. He talked at me, involving me, as he was sometimes fond of doing, in a vague and general charge against "fellows." "If fellows ain't true to each other," he would say, "how can they expect other fellows to be true to them? But fellows are so selfish. I hate fellows who ain't open and above-board with me. I've known fellows have their heads punched for less." I asked him plainly if he was referring to me. He replied evasively, that fellows who found caps that fitted them had better wear them. I said that the cap did not fit me. So for a time the discussion closed. I did not want to quarrel with Sparrow. He was sometimes peevish and petulant, but on the whole he was a very good fellow. He was the confidant of my love, as I was of his. We were bound to each other by treaty and by self-interest. For if one failed, when his turn came for that duty, to engage the attention of Miss Columba, what chance had the other of approaching and laying siege to the twins?

I have suggested that our courtship had its difficulties. Miss Columba avoided, it was rare to find the sisters apart. They were as twin roses grafted on one stem. They were almost inseparable. They were never so happy as when permitted to appear twined together, their arms wreathed round each other's waists, and constituting a group that Sparrow and I found to be quite maddening in its exquisite grace and beauty.

And to make love to Nelly while Elly was so close at hand, or vice versa, was certainly trying to the lover, taxed severely his powers of speech and strength of nerve. His passion-fraught words might move Nelly to tears; but what if they stirred Elly to laughter? Believe me, it's arduous work wooing twins. Happily they were parted at dinner-time, occupying seats on either hand of their father. And sometimes there were other guests who unconsciously aided us in sundering the sisters. We disliked these other guests as a rule, however—pronouncing them rivals.

How their relations managed I cannot say. I don't think they really knew the twins apart, but only pretended to do so. Old Mr. Blissett, I'm pretty sure, had but the vaguest notions as to which was Nelly, which Elly. But it didn't matter to him. He called them each "pet," and so surmounted all difficulty about their names. He kissed them both alike. They both kissed him. What more could he want?

Sparrow and I went on loving, and talking to each other of our loves. I confess I found him prosy and tiresome; he told the story of his affections at such undue length—went into so much needless detail—and I thought it really ungenerous of him to yawn when in my turn, but expressing myself far more happily, I set forth my passion and enumerated my emotions. Still we greatly enjoyed the situation altogether. There were times of depression, it is true, when the twins had seemed to look coldly on us, and we mingled our tears together and talked of ended dreams, blighted lives, and tombstones; but there were moments of exhilaration—Elly and Nelly had smiled upon us—when we rejoiced exceedingly, and pledged each other in brimming cups. On one occasion I remember the liquor was champagne, but, as a rule, our libations were of a more modest vintage. I have some recollection of our treating each other to threepennyworths of gin and cold water, and becoming much excited over that humble stimulant.

Our love for the twins was delightful, but it was attended with some expense. Sparrow and I exhausted all our pocket-money, and even mortgaged heavily our future incomes in our determination to appear attractively arrayed. Those were days when there prevailed a lively faith in bear's grease, and when richly anointed heads of hair were the vogue; when the curling-irons rectified nature's mistakes in the matter of straight locks; when lacquered boots were worn painfully pointed at the toe; when

waistcoats, much rolled in the region of the collar, were gorgeous of pattern, embossed, embroidered, and arabesqued; when it was impossible to assume trousers of too light a hue, or to strap them too tightly beneath the instep; when a gaudy satin stock bound the throat, and formed below it a sort of ornamental chest-plaster, in which it was permitted to stick jewelled pins of vast dimensions linked together by golden chains; when a camellia japonica in the button-hole was as a necessary of life. Happy times, but, as I have suggested, expensive for articleed clerks afflicted with the tender passion.

My love, I found, affected my parts of speech. At first I was curiously dumb in the presence of my heart's idol. When language returned to me it had a sort of Elizabethan or blank-verse quality. Ordinary modes of expression seemed inappropriate to the due imparting of my passion. The case demanded resort to the much neglected second personal singular. "Do you love me?" a man might say to a crowd. But "Dost thou love me?" could only be addressed to one, and was an inquiry of very special and individual interest.

A golden opportunity occurred. It was just before one of the dinners in Tavistock-square. I stood in the drawing-room window with Elly Blissett. We were partially screened by the window-curtains. I longed to drop on my knees before her. But there was the chance of being seen by others. Moreover, I had been driven to the conclusion that kneeling to one's mistress must of necessity have gone out of fashion when tightly strapped trousers came in.

"And dost thou love me?" I murmured in bass notes that I must have unconsciously borrowed from some popular tragedian of the period. "Wilt thou, indeed, be mine?"

"You're not a Quaker, are you, Mr. Stack?" said Elly, opening wide wondering blue eyes.

"Nay, hear me swear!" I continued.

"No, that's not like a Quaker!"

Dinner was announced. We were parted. I was somewhat discouraged. But assisted perhaps by the stimulating character of old Blissett's port, I determined upon a further effort after dinner, when, a trifle flushed by good cheer and incipient indigestion, the gentlemen rejoined the ladies in the drawing-room. I spoke again much to the same purport.

"You creature! Why that's exactly what I heard you say to Elly before dinner."

By great mischance I had this time ad-

dressed myself to Nelly instead of to Elly. Nelly was pounced upon by lynx-eyed Miss Columba, and was led to the piano to sing a duet with her sister. They were charming efforts the duets of the twins; but things perhaps rather to contemplate than to listen to.

Sparrow had heard my speech to Nelly. He was furious. I certainly think he had been indiscreet in his application to Mr. Blissett's port. We left the house together. He had commenced accusing and vilipending me in the hall, while we were searching for our hats. In the square outside he offered to fight me. "I hate fellows to be mean," he said. But for the appearance of a policeman I think we should have proceeded to violent measures. We parted upon the most angry terms.

When we met in the office next morning he renewed his reproaches. His wrath knew no bounds. He even hurled at me Jacobs's Law Dictionary, a heavy volume in every respect. I meditated flinging in return Chitty's Practice. Fortunately, perhaps, I was sent out suddenly to attend a summons for time to plead at the Judges' Chambers in Rolls Gardens. It may be that manslaughter was thus prevented.

For days we did not speak to each other, but only scowled fiercely when our glances chanced to meet. But soon a common sorrow reunited us. The Miss Blissetts left town, in the custody of their aunt, to sojourn some weeks at Ramsgate.

What were we to do? Our alarm was dire. A ghastly rumour obtained to the effect that our designs had been discovered, that it was because of us and our proceedings that Nelly and Elly had been removed from Tavistock-square. We yielded to despair. It was clear to us that the exquisite twins would fall a prey to the penniless adventurers, possibly of foreign extraction, and possessed of whiskers, who, we agreed, were for ever haunting English watering-places, bent upon abducting the loveliest of our countrywomen. No doubt we were also penniless, or might have been so described by adverse critics, but, then, how affluent we were in sublime sentiments, how deeply tender our emotions in regard to the heavenly twins!

"Fellows ought to act up to their opinions," said Sparrow, gloomily. "Fellows shouldn't go to work in an underhand way. Fellows should always apply direct to girls' parents in these cases."

"You mean that we ought to ask old Blissett for his daughters' hands in marriage?"

"That's what fellows would do who'd any pluck," he growled.

This was a taunt. True, it involved imputation upon himself. But that did not make it the less irritating. Our conversation became unpleasant again. The situation was of an exasperating kind. We interchanged insolences, charging each other with want of courage, goading each other on to deeds of desperation. Once more we were of accord. We would together beard old Blissett in his den—for so we spoke of his private room in Laurence Pountney-lane—and simultaneously lay our case before him.

We struck while the iron was hot. We rushed wildly into the presence of our principal. We spoke while our pulses beat feverishly. Somehow we made ourselves intelligible, and yet it must have been a very confused statement we rendered—a mad medley of words, breathlessly uttered. When one of us broke down the other took up the running, "I love Nelly" and "I love Elly" being the burden of our declarations respectively. A strange scene—a trifle ludicrous and absurd, as I now judge, but we thought gravely enough of it at the time.

Old Mr. Blissett surveyed us with aghast eyes. "Bless my soul!" he cried, a frequent ejaculation of his, and, as he was apt to do in moments of perplexity, he rubbed his bald scalp industriously with the palm of his hand. "One at a time, one at a time. What! are you both mad? Marry my girls! Marry Elly and Nelly!"

Such was the wish of our lives, we cried, the only hope that gave value to our existence. We begged him to bestow upon us Nelly and Elly, and bid us live. If he denied us his twins, why, then, our deaths would be at his door, and let him look to it. Something to that effect was our speech; erratic, perhaps, but tersely eloquent.

"Bless my soul! Give you Elly and Nelly! Why, you don't know one from the other!"

What of that? He didn't either.

"Don't be ridiculous!" he cried. "Besides, they're already engaged to be married."

"Engaged!" we shrieked in unison, noisily as a chorus in an opera by Verdi.

"Yes; and have been for some time. It's their aunt's doing. I have no doubt it's all right. I have had little or no concern in it. I left it altogether to their aunt. I have no doubt the marriages will prove happy ones."

How had I been mistaken in Miss Columba! She was a match-maker after all!

We demanded the names of the monsters in (presumably) human form who had robbed us of our brides; not, however, putting our inquiry quite in that form.

"Oddly enough," said Mr. Blissett, "they're going to marry twin brothers, whom they've known from childhood—wards of mine—Freddy and Eddy Fowler. They're the children of my client, the late Mr. Alderman Fowler, and entitled to a pretty property. They're most worthy young gentlemen, and as like as two peas. I don't know them apart, and I don't know which is which when they're together, and whether it's Freddy that's going to marry Elly, and Eddy Nelly, or whether Freddy takes Nelly and Eddy Elly; I don't believe they know themselves, and I'll be shot if I can tell you. Love-suits, you see, are sometimes quite as puzzling and intricate as chancery-suits, and there's no finding a clear way out of them. But the church will amicably adjust the matter one of these fine days, and there'll be no more to be said. All I know is, the parson who is called in to settle the case will have his work cut out for him, and will find it necessary to keep his eyes wide open, or there's certain to be an accident. But it will be his look-out. It's no affair of mine. So now don't talk any more nonsense, there's good lads, but get on with your work. When are you going to finish fair copying that State of Facts for the Master's Office in *Biffin v. Biffin*?"

"We were not born under Gemini," I said to Sparrow, moved by that feeling of despair which leads men to aggravate their own dismalness, and further mortify themselves by attempts at jokes upon their wretched condition. He did not heed me; perhaps he did not understand me. I think I have already stated that he was a young man from the West of England.

"Our twins marrying those other twins!" he moaned piteously. "Nelly and Elly, Freddy and Eddy—what frightful confusion! It oughtn't to be allowed. The police ought to interfere. The Court of Chancery ought to supply a remedy. Twins marrying twins! And suppose twins should come of the marriages?"

He nearly fell from his high stool; his voice wailed in agony; his facial expression was imbecile; he was becoming delirious: contemplating an endless vista of twin-born creatures, a fearful vision of bewildered generations, worlds of intricate embarrassment!

Our disappointment was crushing. For some time our anguish was extreme. But we got over it; we got over, indeed, or through, as the days went on, divers other troubles, trials, and states of suffering, including our terms of clerkship and our "exam" at the Law Institution. But the first discovery—mercifully it dawned upon us very gradually—that we were not quite so blighted as we had rather prided ourselves upon being, came to us as a kind of reproof. We smiled seldom and sadly at first, and only when we quite forgot that we ought rather to scowl. We rarely ventured to laugh in the presence of each other. We felt that we owed it to our ruined hopes and betrayed affections to preserve as long as possible much show of grief and severe melancholy of demeanour.

We were present as guests at the marriages of the Sisters Blissett with the Brothers Fowler; our mood was bitter, but it yielded presently, overcome perhaps by the sweetness of the champagne; and our mirth became somehow far less hollow after breakfast than it had been before.

One preciously malicious thought sustained us. We were persuaded that after all, quite at the last moment, a fatal irremediable mistake had occurred—*the wrong twins had been united!*

Whether this were really the case or no we never knew. But it pleased us greatly to think that it might so have happened.

"You'll want nothing more, sir?" asked the waitress, looking into the room; "we're going to bed now."

"Nothing," replied Arthur, "only don't close the house door, as I'm expecting a messenger from Mr. Gay!"

"Right you are, sir!" replied the girl, and went back to tell her friends in the kitchen that the strange guest was "busy with poils of love-letters," while Arthur commenced the perusal of—

THE IRON CAGE.

It was at the time when all sorts of plots and conspiracies were being hatched at Venice, that a certain private individual, Luca Orioli by name, lived in the town along with his sister Brigida, who kept house for him, and looked after his wants. Brigida was altogether devoted to her brother, and seemed to live but for him, to attend to his comforts, and forward in all things whatever objects he had in view. There are some women like this, who devote themselves to others, and seem to lose

sight of themselves altogether. There are not too many of them, but they exist.

Orioli was by calling a missal painter, an illuminator of ancient manuscripts, but the concerns in which at the time I speak of he was entirely absorbed, were neither literary nor artistic. He was altogether occupied with politics, machinations against the existing government, plans for overthrowing it, and setting up in its place a commonwealth, in which equal rights were to be accorded to all, in which the highest noble in Venice was to enjoy no privileges whatever beyond those which were to be accorded to the meanest citizen in the town.

It was a most hazardous plot against the state in which this Orioli was engaged; he, and I know not how many others; some living at Venice, some elsewhere, at Chioggia, at Verona, at Ravenna even, who knows? At all events they were scattered hither and thither, and had to be communicated with, when any intelligence was to be made known to the fraternity, by letter. Altogether there was a deal of writing to be got through; not letters only, but reports, statements, projects drawn up on paper to be circulated among the different conspirators. And it was in copying such writings out, or taking down the matter of which they were to consist from her brother's lips, that Brigida made herself more useful than in almost any other way. The girl was an excellent writer, and could copy out a document so that it should be as readable as print. This was a rare accomplishment in those days, and Brigida was kept hard at it, you may be assured, writing from dictation, copying papers of which duplicates were wanted, and so on, all through the day, and part of the night as well.

But for all she was so hard worked, the young lady found time to do a little writing on her own account. The fact is, that the signorina had a lover, one Filippo, ordinarily called Lippo, Rinaldi, living at Padua, and with this young fellow she would correspond whenever she got a chance of sending a letter. She would write to him of everything that was going on, both of her brother's doings and her own, and very pretty letters they were, no doubt, and such as any young gentleman, as much in love as Lippo was, would be very glad to get.

This brother and sister lived, as I have heard the story told, in a little piazzetta at the back of the Riva dei Schiavoni, and not far from the church of St. Giorgio de Greci. It was an out-of-the-way kind of place, for it was very important for Orioli

that he should live as retired as possible, and be as much as possible unobserved by anybody. Here, then, it was that for the most part all those plots and machinations in which Orioli was so deeply implicated were concocted, and here, sometimes, one or more of the conspirators would come to confabulate with him, at times when there seemed to be the least chance of discovery.

One autumn afternoon the brother and sister were engaged in preparing a document to be sent to Verona by special messenger that night. As often happened, Luca was dictating, and his sister was writing. The light was fast fading, and Brigida had established herself close to the window to take advantage of all that was to be had. Orioli was at the window too, but he was standing, leaning his forehead against one of the cross mullions which enclosed the small panes of glass, and gazing out into the little piazza behind the house, which had, it may be mentioned, two entrances, one giving on the piazzetta, and the other on one of the small canals which intersect the town in all directions. There was little light in the room except just close to the window, and the gathering darkness held undisputed possession of the other end of the apartment.

Orioli stood and looked out on the piazzetta, but his eyes took in, as far as he was conscious, nothing of the scene before him. He was absorbed in the letter which he was dictating to his sister, and which related to a final meeting of the brotherhood to which he belonged, which was to take place in a few days, and the time, place, and object of which he was notifying to his Veronese friend. Now and then he would pause in the work of dictation, to say a few words to his sister on some subject connected with the matter in hand.

"Brigida," he said, on one of these occasions, "I think I was followed last night when I parted from Tito Grimani and his brother Bartolommeo, in the enclosure at the back of the palace. The vile spies and secret officers of the senate are everywhere, and I surely think that I detected one of them dogging my footsteps last night."

Brigida looked quickly up from her writing with anxious, frightened eyes.

"I am always fearing it," she said. "Dear Luca, the thought that this plot will one day be discovered, and that you will be taken and imprisoned, is for ever haunting me. How I wish that the old days, before you had become involved in any of these terrible risks, were back again!"

At this moment a slight noise in the room attracted Luca's attention, and turning hastily from the window, and looking into that part of the apartment which was involved in comparative obscurity, he was able to detect the shadowy forms of three men, whom he felt at once were servants of the state.

"We come to arrest you as head conspirator in a plot against the lawful authority of the Venetian senate," said the chief officer, stepping forward out of the obscurity.

The Venetian senate in those days made short work of the trial of political offenders. There were so many of these that the government, in its alarm for its own safety, dealt out severe justice to all such who got within its reach. The evidence against Luca Orioli was irresistibly strong, and it being considered that an opportunity of "making an example" was afforded by his detection, it was determined that a punishment should be resorted to in his instance which was only used very rarely, and principally in cases which were marked by especial atrocity: parricides, persons who were convicted of sacrilege, monks or nuns who had broken their vows, and the like exceptionally gross offenders. The punishment in question consisted in being hung out in an iron cage which was suspended from the top of the great bell-tower or Campanile of Venice, and in which the victim was suffered to perish miserably of starvation and exposure. This was the horrible penalty which was awarded to Luca Orioli.

But what was the saddest part of all—and it was certainly felt to be so by Luca himself—was that his sister, his poor little Brigida, was convicted of complicity with him in this disastrous plot, and was condemned to share his punishment.

It was that skill of hers in penmanship which had ruined her. All sorts of documents of the most compromising character, plans of action to be adopted by the leading conspirators, letters to them from Luca himself on matters connected with the plot, which, though intrusted to careful hands for delivery, had fallen into the clutches of the numerous spies who were always on the look-out for such papers, a great mass of such writings had been seized, and proved beyond doubt to be in the young girl's handwriting; proved, indeed, by comparison with the piece of writing on which she was actually engaged at the moment when the officers of justice made their arrest of Luca.

The crushing weight with which this implication of his little sister fell on Luca, can hardly be described in words. Brigida—Brida as he always called her—had been so many years under his care, her parents having died in her childhood, and was so much his junior, that he had got to regard her almost more as a daughter than as a sister, so much did a feeling of care for her, and a sense that she was a creature to be sheltered from all harm, and protected by him at all cost, pervade all the relations between the two. Nay, it is impossible to say whether the physical difference between them—for Luca was a big powerful man, while Brida was slightly and delicately formed in an uncommon degree—may not have helped to strengthen this feeling on the brother's part, that to keep his little sister out of harm's way was one of the chief occupations of his life.

That this frail creature should be involved through him in so terrible a calamity was to Orioli a thought which was entirely insupportable. Her constitution was delicate, as her frame was, and there could be little doubt that the exposure to the cold and damp, for it was now late autumn, must cause her the extremest suffering. Death, of course, was inevitable for both, as they were to hang there in the iron cage till famine did its work, but that she should suffer as well as die—! It was too terrible, and the earnest and passionate appeal which Luca made to the judges on his sister's behalf—he had made no such appeal for himself—might have touched, one would have thought, even harder hearts than those to which he had to address himself.

"It is *my* doing, and mine only," he cried, at last. "She did what I told her—miserable that I am. On me let the penalty fall—a double penalty if you choose. Let me be tortured, burnt at a slow fire, anything, only spare her, my little Brigida, a creature incapable of harming any one, and whose love for her brother has been her only fault."

But he spoke to men of stone when he addressed that pitiless assembly in the dimly-lighted council chamber of the Doge's Palace. The fiat had gone forth, and must be obeyed. She was sentenced, and must suffer.

A damp cold night at the end of October. An iron cage hung out upon a crane-like arm projecting from the top of the great belfry tower of Venice, and in it were the two malefactors who had incurred the

wrath of the Venetian senate. The cage and its occupants had been hung out a little before sunset, and while the light lasted the people in the piazza below had stood about the base of the pillar gazing up at the uncommon sight.

There was not much to see. Little could be made out at that height of the two figures in the cage; the structure itself, and its occupants, looking not much bigger than a bird-cage with a couple of linnets inside. Still the people knew that human creatures were up there, and they gazed so long as the light lasted, and not till it had quite faded did the last of them go away. The cage would be there the next day, however, "that was one comfort," and after that who could tell how long. There would be a couple of corpses in it one day instead of these living creatures. The spectacle would be more interesting, if possible, then even than now.

Hand in hand, the brother and sister sat crouching on the floor of the cage, quiet, resigned, and waiting for the end. They spoke but seldom, a word or two now and then, an attempt to encourage each other; then there would come a long pause, while they took half unconscious note of the scene around, above, below. Mechanically their eyes dwelt on the near details of the huge column to which their prison was suspended, the ornamentation which looked so smooth and elaborate from below, but here close by seemed quite rough and unfinished. The stars burnt above them, the twinkling lights came out in the city below, the dark lagoon stretched out as far as they could see, the tower and belfries of the town showed dimly above the other buildings, but none came near in height to the great Campanile from which they hung, and which, when the bells rang out, seemed positively to sway with the vibration of the deafening sound.

They were utterly wearied and exhausted. It was cold, and the damp rose from the canal and the lagoon, and seemed to chill them to the bone. Poor little Brigida shivered involuntarily from time to time. The absence of all hope—all possibility of deliverance—seemed to depress her vital power, and produced a degree of chill which the actual condition of the temperature did not account for.

"My poor Brida," said Luca, tenderly, looking kindly on her in the dim light, "they might have spared you. What a conspirator," he added, smiling bitterly, "what a dangerous subject. Oh!" he cried, his tone changing suddenly, "that

something could be done to deliver you from this dreadful fate!"

"Do you wish me away, then, Luca?" She paused a moment, and her thoughts went back to happier times. "Luca," she went on, "how happy we used to be before you were mixed up with these dreadful plots and conspiracies, when you used to work all day at your beautiful missals, and I sat by you making the patterns which you had designed on my embroidery; and Lippo, who used to be with us so often. Poor Lippo! I wonder what he is doing, and if he got the letter which I sent to him after you were arrested——"

She stopped abruptly as her brother started up from the crouching position in which he had lain so long, causing the cage to swing violently to and fro by the sudden movement.

"What was that?" he cried. "Something rushed by me in the air; was it a bird? It came quite near my head."

"Again," he cried, after a short interval. "Ah! it is not a bird. It is—it is an arrow!"

"An arrow?" echoed Brigida; "what can that mean?" The moon had come out brightly just at this time from behind a cloud, and they both gazed down on the piazza. The sky was covered again presently, and everything was indistinct, but Brigida thought she had made out something like the figure of a man in the great square, near the base of the column. "What can it mean?" said Brigida again.

"It means," replied her brother, "that we are hung up here as a mark to be shot at. But in the dark, why in the dark?"

Brigida shuddered involuntarily and drew nearer to her brother. "I hope they will kill me first," she said.

The words were hardly out of her mouth when a third arrow came whizzing through the air. This time it struck Luca full on the shoulder.

"They aim well by this dim light," he said. "Strange," he added, after a pause, "the arrow hit me full, and yet it has not pierced my skin, nor, I think, made any wound. But what is this?" he added a moment afterwards. A line had fallen across his arm, and as he drew one end of it to him he found that it was attached to the arrow which had struck him. "The arrow is blunted at the end, and there is a silken line attached to it."

Quick in her woman's wit, quicker still in her love instinct, Brigida saw in an instant what had happened. "It is from Lippo," she cried; "you know what a good

marksman he is. I knew he would help us."

"There is something fastened to the line," said Luca, pulling it swiftly into the cage. "It is heavy," he continued, "and gets heavier as I draw it nearer. It is a rope!"

An exclamation of relief burst from brother and sister at once. It was followed, as often happens, by a reaction.

"But the cage," cried Brigida. "How can we get out?"

"Easily," was the reply. "They have thought that the height from the ground was safeguard enough against any attempt to escape, and have not considered it necessary to place the bars very near together. A little squeezing, dear, and we shall get that small body of yours through between these two bars, which by some accident have got more forced apart than the others."

Brigida shuddered involuntarily, but her brother allowed her no time for reflection. Rapidly, but skilfully, he fastened one end of the rope to the cage, and then tenderly, but very securely, wound the other end about his sister's body.

"How terrible it looks," said the girl, gazing down into the darkness below. "Luca," she cried as if a sudden thought had struck her, "you will let me down, but who will let you down?"

"I shall descend the rope hand over hand, as I have done scores of times for pastime at the gymnasium. It is nothing to me."

"Oh, Luca, are you sure? And the bars. If I can get through them, which seems hardly possible, are you sure you can, dear?"

"I am as slippery as an eel," he answered with a forced laugh, and shall get through as easily as possible. "Come, dear," he added, hurriedly, "there is not a moment to lose. The rope is safely round you, it cannot slip. Now, dear, courage—a little pain in squeezing through, and you are safe."

He gave her, in his merciful consideration, no time to think, and very firmly, but with such care as a surgeon uses when subjecting his patient to inevitable pain, he forced her through the opening between the bars, which at the particular part might have been perhaps from seven to seven and a half inches asunder.

"Oh Luca, Luca," cried the girl, "take me back, you will never, never be able to follow me. You are so much bigger. Take me back, and let me stay with you to the end."

She struggled and clung to the cage, but Luca would not listen to her. He detached her hands from the bars, only too easily, for she was half fainting, then he leaned over and kissed her head, and then with rapid but cautious action paid out the rope through the bars.

When Brigida reached the termination of her hazardous journey she was insensible, and it was in that state that Lippo received her into his arms. By the time she was released from the rope which was bound about her body, the poor girl had regained possession of her senses. Lippo's first care, after almost suffocating his recovered treasure with caresses, was to provide for Brigida's immediate escape. He had a boat ready in the canal close by, manned by a couple of boatmen whom he could implicitly trust, and he was for hurrying her away at once, lest any of the officers of the night-watch, in making their rounds, should enter the piazza. But Lippo's entreaties, usually so powerful with Brigida, were in this case of no avail. Till Luca was free of the cage, and stood there beside her, nothing would induce her to consult her own safety. She would fly with him or not at all, and the utmost that Lippo's persuasion could effect was to induce her to hide herself, within a recess in the great building which flanked the south side of the square, and came near to the Campanile's base.

The girl was, in truth, in an agony of apprehension lest that escape from the cage, which, even in her case, had been effected with so much difficulty, should for her brother be a thing altogether impracticable. With every moment that passed this terrible apprehension gained increase of strength. As to what Luca himself was about, neither she nor Lippo could do more than form the vaguest conjectures. At that height, and in the darkness, they could see nothing but the general outline of the cage against the sky. They could make out, too, that the rope was violently agitated and shaken, evidently owing to the movement imparted to the cage by the efforts of its occupant to force himself through the bars. But time passed, and there was still no indication of that descending figure for which they were looking with such absorbing eagerness, and Brigida could no longer resist a sickening conviction that her worst fears were realised.

"Oh," she cried, "why did I leave him? It was selfish, it was cruel. I knew he could not get through. Those large, strong shoulders of his"—and here, so strangely

are we constituted, came out a touch of sisterly pride—"would never pass through that small opening. Lippo," she cried, almost angrily, "can you do nothing? Why did you shoot that arrow? Why did you take me away from him? Poor, noble brother, he only cared about me. Lippo," she cried again, petulantly, "there must be something more possible. Quick, the night is passing away, and when daylight comes it will be too late."

Lippo cast one look up towards the cage, and mechanically stretched out his hand to the silken cord which hung down still from the cage by the side of the rope. As he touched it he seemed to conceive a new idea.

"There is hope yet," he said. "Only stay here, keep within the shadow of the wall, and wait, with what patience you can, till I return."

He did not stop for her answer, but dashed off across the piazza at his utmost speed.

What a time was that which followed! Brigida was alone, alone at the foot of the column, at the top of which her well-loved brother was still encaged. She could not communicate with him. She had no one at all to speak to or take counsel with. It was one of those dreadful cases in which the severest part of the trial is the necessity of total inaction. It was almost unbearable. She longed to speak. She longed to call aloud to her brother; to entreat him not to despair. She felt that he had abandoned all thoughts of escape. The rope hung quietly now, showing that no movement was taking place in the cage. Oh that she could know what this quietness meant! Was he waiting, patient, resigned, for the end? Did he think she had abandoned him, and that she had consulted her own safety in flight? No, he could not believe *that*. Or had some dreadful thing happened? Had he got fixed between the bars?—was he strangled, suffocated?

The suspense was horrible, but it must be borne. Brigida was possessed of the priceless gift of good sense. She was wise as well as loving. She must be quiet, she must keep herself concealed, as she had been told to do. Everything—her brother's fate especially—depended on her not being found. She must keep within the shadow of that piece of masonry behind which Lippo had hidden her, and wait.

Once she stole out to the foot of the Campanile. The rope by which she had descended hung out away from the pillar, and if any one came by the place would attract attention. She got hold of it,

and twisted and entwined it among some of the projecting decorations about the base of the column, so that it should be less conspicuous. Then she crept back and hid herself once again.

Even at that hour—it was between two and three in the morning—St. Mark's Place was not entirely deserted. A couple of belated Venetians crossed the square just after she had got back to her hiding-place. They came quite near to where she was concealed, and stood looking up at the column, evidently occupied with the topic of the moment, which, indeed, all Venice was talking about. "It is the girl I pity most," she heard one of the men say, just as they passed out of hearing. She was, indeed, at this moment, perhaps, most to be pitied. After the two men came a party of the watch on their rounds. They came near to the foot of the Campanile, and Brigida's heart almost stood still with terror.

"They seem quiet enough up there," said one of the men.

"Quiet? Yes; I should think so," rejoined another. "I shouldn't wonder if one of them, at any rate, was quiet in death. The girl looked more than half dead before she was put up there."

"I wonder they haven't placed a sentry here by the Campanile," said one of the men, who had not spoken before.

"Why, what would be the use of a sentry?" retorted the first speaker. "How do you think they could get out of the cage? And do you suppose that, even if they did, they could make a hop, skip, and a jump of it from the top of the Campanile, which is more than three hundred feet high, to the bottom? A sentry, indeed!"

The sergeant in command of the party interposed at this juncture with the word to march, and the little band passed on. They left poor Brigida with new matter for alarm. What if a sentry should yet be placed there? What if the watch should come round again? What if her brother should be able to get out, and they should appear as he was in the act of descending?

This inaction was terrible. Brigida felt as if she must do something. She would go to the foot of the pillar and call aloud to her brother. She would go and meet Lippo. No; she would do none of these things. She would control herself with all her might, and keep close there in her dark corner till she could do something that would be really useful. She would—Ah, there was Lippo. Now something would be done, at any rate.

"Where have you been? What have

you done?" she cried, as soon as he was within hearing of her.

"I have been home to fetch this," he answered, holding up a file. "Luca must file through one of the bars at the top. Then he will be able to bend it aside, and pass through."

"Oh, but is there time?"

"The day will not begin to break for an hour."

Even while he was speaking Lippo was engaged in fastening the little instrument on which so much depended to the silken cord, which still hung down by the side of the column. This done, he gave the line one or two sharp pulls to attract the attention of the occupant of the cage.

"Thank God he is alive at least," murmured Brigida, as the line with the file attached to it was swiftly drawn up from above.

And now, indeed, there followed a time when the suspense endured by those who waited below amounted to something little short of agony. It was vain for them to strain their eyes into the darkness; they could make out nothing of what was going on above. It was vain to listen for the sound of the file; it was a windy night, and so slight a noise could not be heard at that distance. Then there was the ever-present fear lest some one should, even at that unlikely hour, appear on the piazza. The watch, again on their rounds, passed by once more with lights and their arms glittering, but this time they did not come so close to the column as they did before. Presently afterwards a drunken fellow came by and insisted on talking to Lippo in a disastrously friendly strain. He stayed so long, and was so garrulous on the subject of the cage and its occupants, that Lippo could only get him to leave the place by going with him, returning alone at his utmost speed as soon as he had lured the talkative sot safely out of the square.

Meanwhile the night, or rather the morning, was wearing on. It was the time of year when the darkness is long in giving place to daylight, and there was as yet no hint even of approaching dawn. Only the striking of the hours from the neighbouring clocks told our two watchers of the near approach of dawn, and made them tremble. They almost counted the minutes now, so precious had they become. If once the city began to wake up, and the people to stir abroad, the escape of Luca from his prison would be impossible. There was no indication of any such thing as yet, but the time was, nevertheless, near at hand when the world would wake up

for the day, and the life of Venice begin afresh.

While Lippo and Brigida were waiting at the column's foot, turning these things over and over in their thoughts, they were suddenly startled by the sound of some object falling, with a metallic clinking sound, on the pavement of the square. Everything that befel now was of the most prodigious moment, and Lippo rushed to the spot, and falling on his knees on the ground made eager search for the object, whatever it might be, whose fall had produced the sound. An exclamation of dismay brought Brigida to his side. He was holding in his hand the file which so short a time before they had seen drawn up to the top of the column.

"What is it that has happened?" faltered Brigida. Her faculties were in some sort benumbed by long tension, and she could not understand, only felt that something was wrong.

"He has dropped it while at work," replied Lippo. "We must send it up to him again; but how? The silken cord is drawn up—ah, there is the rope!"

As Lippo spoke, he looked up and saw what seemed to take the very power of speaking away from him. He stretched out his hand, and seizing Brigida by the wrist, pointed upward towards the top of the column.

A dim faint glimmer of approaching dawn was just beginning to make itself felt rather than seen, in the eastern quarter of the sky. It was not dawn yet, only the first hint of the coming morning twilight, enough to give some slight additional distinctness to any object that stood out against the sky, and no more. The true daybreak, which was presently to bathe the whole of the heavens in loveliest pellucid light, was near at hand, but it was not there yet.

When Brigida looked up in the direction indicated by her lover, she could at first see nothing but the mighty pile of masonry at whose foot she was standing, black and enormous against the sky; but, as she continued to gaze, she became presently conscious that high up in the air, suspended between earth and heaven, there hung some object which moved, and swung, and swayed this way and that as it descended, for it was descending, towards the still distant earth.

The file had done its work.

Mechanically she fell upon her knees, it was only in that attitude that she could await the end, and, with clasped hands, gazed upwards at that slowly descending

form, which now with every inch of nearer approach became more distinctly and more surely recognisable.

My little story has reached its end. As soon as Luca reached the ground, after safely accomplishing his perilous descent, the three made off, with such speed as belongs to those who fly for life, to the boat which was awaiting them, and, long before their flight had been suspected, or the fact proclaimed that the iron cage was empty, its late occupants were far away from terrible Venice, and safe from their pursuers. And in due time the old days of the missal painting and embroidering were revived, only the scene was in a tranquil Dutch town, and Lippo, now the husband of happy little Brigida, was a permanent part of the establishment.

THE next manuscript had a pencil indorsement by Cameron, "Told to me by Dr. Barr," and was called—

FACE TO FACE.

I.

My first meeting with Mr. Owen Curtis, barrister-at-law, happened a good many years ago. He was junior counsel for the plaintiff in an action for damages brought against a railway company. There had been a collision on the line, and his client, a passenger, had sustained severe injuries. I was one of the medical witnesses.

There had been a medical consultation in order that the counsel engaged might be thoroughly instructed as to the technical and scientific questions arising from the evidence. It devolved upon Curtis to master these details of the case so that he might duly prompt his leader as the trial proceeded. I had, therefore, several interviews with the junior counsel, and I remember being much struck with his quickness of perception, and the soundness of his judgment in deciding upon the points to be specially urged upon the jury. He had little scientific knowledge to begin with, but his trained intelligence, his retentive memory, and logical method, stood him in good stead. He acquitted himself admirably. It was mainly owing to his exertions that the jury were so liberal in their award of compensation to his client. His leader—who only came into court to deliver his speeches—warmly thanked him, and the judge particularly complimented him. I make mention of these facts with a view to the character and qualities of the man being the better comprehended.

The case over, it so chanced that I met Curtis again and again. There was at no time the intimacy of friendship subsisting between us, but rather a good sort of understanding, based, I suppose, upon mutual esteem and professional consideration. If I ever needed legal help I felt sure of obtaining it at his hands; so, if he wanted medical advice, I took it for granted he would come to me.

Still, even in this informal way I could hardly count him as a patient, for he so rarely ailed anything. He was a tall, large-framed, middle-aged man, of active habits, and with every appearance of great physical strength. His complexion was swarthy, his features were massive but regular, his eyes large and dark, without being remarkably brilliant. His forehead was broad, and looked lower than it really was, from his wearing his thick brown-black hair falling forward upon it in heavy masses. He was usually rather careless about his dress, but altogether his aspect was decidedly that of a gentleman.

He called upon me rather late one night, begging me to pardon his so doing on the ground that he greatly desired to consult me, and to occupy more of my time, perhaps, than I could conveniently devote to him earlier in the day. I was alone, and I hastened to assure him that my services were quite at his disposal. He looked anxious and jaded, I noted, and his manner was certainly agitated. His hand was tremulous and feverishly hot. His voice was weak and husky, and he seemed to have unusual difficulty in expressing himself. I confess, it occurred to me that he had been dining too freely. Presently, however, I was able to dismiss this notion. He grew more composed, and succeeded in controlling the nervous excitement which had at first appeared to affect him. I judged him to be suffering from over-fatigue and excessive application to his professional duties. He admitted that his health was but indifferent, that his appetite now often failed him, and that, of late, his sleep had been much disturbed. My advice was of the kind usual under the circumstances. I recommended rest, change of air and scene, with some recourse to tonic treatment. He nodded his head, and implied that he had been fully prepared to receive advice of that nature.

"But there's more in it than you think," he said, after a pause, during which his agitation returned to him. "I have not told you all. It's not ordinary assistance that I ask of you. I came to you be-

cause I felt sure that you would, in the first place, listen to me calmly and patiently, and next, having heard me, would not be in a hurry, as many men would be, to set me down as stark mad. Please understand the expression literally—*stark mad*."

"Certainly not," I said, with a start, wondering at his words. He was much moved, and had the air of one constraining himself to make a painful confession. But in look and manner he manifested no trace of mental disorder.

"Yet," he resumed, "to pronounce me of unsound mind would only be a reasonable conclusion. If my case were another's I should certainly not hesitate so to decide. Indeed, I have the greatest difficulty, as it is, in divesting myself of the conviction that I am, to speak plainly, going mad. More, that on one subject, on one only, so far as I can at present determine, I am already mad."

I ventured to suggest that morbid imaginings of the kind he mentioned were frequently due, to the depression of spirits which accompanies derangement of the physical system, exhaustion of strength, and undue concentration of the mental faculties; that with the renovation of his general health, I had no doubt, these particular fancies of his, however distressing and acute they might now be, would speedily depart.

"But you will not decline to listen to me?" he asked.

I said I thought it would be more prudent to leave the matter at rest, for the present at any rate, and I asked him to let me see him again after he had followed my prescriptions and permitted himself an interval of retirement and repose. We could then, I added, if the necessity for so doing still existed, go fully into the subject he had referred to. This proposal did not content him, however.

"There is no time to lose," he said, excitedly. "Already I may have delayed too long. It is hard to speak on this matter, even to you; but it is harder still to keep silence. The burden of doubt and fear I have been bearing is becoming quite insupportable to me. Think what my position is. I feel that at any moment I may be charged with being insane, and I am conscious that I have no sufficient answer to the charge. Still I feel myself competent and sane enough to discuss the subject, to reason upon it, as though the case were not my own, but another man's. How long shall I be able to do so? Who can

say? In justice to myself I ought to speak now."

"But surely," I said, "you are attaching exaggerated importance to a passing fancy, generated by ill health, which will soon, of itself, wholly cease to trouble you."

"Judging, then, by what you know and can now see of me, putting aside what I have just now said, you would pronounce me sane?"

"Unquestionably," I answered.

"I should think so too, but for one circumstance. My health, as I have told you, is not so good as formerly, still I do not find my capacity for work affected to any appreciable extent. I have been much occupied of late, but not excessively so. I can detect no decline of my professional reputation. My clients still trust me, the attorneys still bring me work. Ask any man at the bar and he will tell you that I am held in general esteem as a 'rising junior.' I believe even now the Chancellor would give me 'silk' if I cared to move towards taking it. You yourself would probably not hesitate to follow my legal opinion if you were in any difficulty. So far then I am not less sane than my fellows. But now comes my—what am I to call it? Let me employ a mild term, and say delusion. You will let me speak of it?"

I could not refuse.

"Granting me sane then, otherwise, in one respect I am strangely, terribly at fault. I'll be as brief as I may. When I look in the glass what ought I to see?"

"Your own image, of course."

"The reflection of a dark man, full-faced, with strongly marked features and nearly black hair?"

"Exactly."

His description of himself was sufficiently accurate.

"Well, I see nothing of the kind."

"What then do you see?"

He hesitated a little; then he said with some effort:

"When I look in the glass, it seems to me that quite another face than mine looks out of the glass at me."

"And this face——"

"I can scarcely describe it. But it's not my face; it is different in form, colour, expression, in every respect."

"But this is surely an optical delusion."

"It is rather, I think, a fatal hallucination, or evidence of diseased brain."

"You have looked in a defective plate. Your mind is ill at ease. Your nerves have been unstrung. You have surrendered yourself to some complete misconception."

"Such would be no doubt a satisfactory explanation of a delusion of the kind in an ordinary case. But I may say that I am not weakly constituted in mind or body. I am wholly without the imaginative faculty. I am hardened against fanciful influences. I am by nature, by education, and by professional habit, strictly a practical, reasoning, and common-sense creature. I am incapable of giving sudden and rash credence to an idea of this kind, of accepting it without the most resolute resistance, the fullest examination. It is no affair of a defective looking-glass peered into by a frightened, imaginative, credulous man. I have tried the thing again and again. I have tested it in every way I could think of. I have studied and investigated it as I would a case formally submitted to me for a legal opinion. I have cross-examined it, if I may so express myself, as I would a suspicious witness. Candidly, then, am I a man likely to be mistaken as to my experiences in this matter?"

I felt bound to admit that I believed him to be as little likely as myself to be readily deceived in such a case.

"I have tried the thing not in one possibly defective glass as you have suggested, but in five hundred glasses."

"With the same result?"

"Always with the same result."

There was a glass over the mantelpiece in my room. I stood up before it.

"Look here," I said, "and tell me what you see." He came to my side. "You see my reflection to begin with? Is there anything wrong with that?"

"Nothing whatever."

"Now turn to your own. What do you see?"

"The face I have spoken of. Not mine, nothing like mine, but another man's; a face I have seen only in the glass when I have looked to find my own."

"It is like no face you have ever seen before?"

"It is like no face I have ever seen before even in my dreams. I am not mistaken in this matter. I am not the victim of an optical delusion. I know what my own face is like. This is not the case of an ugly old woman studying her glass, and expecting to find herself young and beautiful. I am indifferent as to my general appearance. It would not pain me to hear myself pronounced hideous and misshapen. Still I know this is not my face. What that is like I have satisfied myself. I made it my business to satisfy myself." He produced a packet of photographs. "Here are

various portraits of myself, more or less successful. I can recognise them all as portraits of myself. No one bears the slightest resemblance to the face I now see in the glass exactly opposite me."

"And you cannot describe it?"

"Rather say that I can give no description of it that at all satisfies me in regard to accuracy and completeness. But I am, as you know, or perhaps as you do not know, something of an artist. I can boast a certain facility in sketching. Well, I have frequently endeavoured to sketch this face that looks out at me from my looking-glass. I have not wholly succeeded. Something of expression and air escapes my art, defies my pencil. Still what I have drawn may help you to conceive the kind of face I see, and will convince you that it is nothing like my own or any distortion or mistaken view of it. I have made several sketches, all failing, however, in some respects. Whether it proves more my sanity or my insanity I cannot decide, but I may state that I have made these drawings, calmly and deliberately, with little more excitement than I should feel in taking a sketchy portrait of some person quite indifferent to me—a bystander in court, let me say."

It struck me as, in any case, decidedly creditable to the strength of his nervous system that he should have been able composedly to make a drawing of the spectre, if it was so to be called, he believed to be haunting him.

"This face you speak of occasions you no alarm, then?" I inquired.

"I am not emotional, and I am not easily alarmed. In itself, the face I see where I should, of right see my own, does not much disturb me, except inasmuch as it is to be accounted a symptom of diseased brain, and as it compels me to suspect my state of mind. At first I was merely affected by a sense of strangeness and uneasiness. I was hopeful that the delusion—for so, I suppose, I must call it, though it is to me a matter of most indisputable fact—would sooner or later fade and depart, that I should overcome and banish it by sheer strength of intellect and force of volition. This has not happened. I have grown, therefore, vexed, discomfited, tormented beyond measure. You will say that I might escape this delusion—this *thing*—by avoiding looking-glasses. No doubt. A looking-glass is a small matter to me, and I could live well enough without one. But then you must understand the constant, unremitting temptation to test my mental con-

dition—to ascertain whether I am or not still the victim of this extraordinary visitation. I am for ever asking myself, am I mad or not? Is the spectre still there? Shall I see myself or another if I turn to the glass? My strength is yielding. I feel myself gradually borne down. So I come to tell you of my state, and to ask if you can help me, feeling satisfied that knowing me as you do, you would not hurriedly, or without due listening to me, form an opinion in the matter."

His manner was perfectly rational, and, allowing for the very natural distress he experienced in speaking of a condition of things that, as he well knew, impeached his own sanity, he could not have stated a case in court with more calmness and lucidity.

I turned to examine his drawings. They were slight, free-handed sketches in pen and ink, exhibiting considerable artistic skill, of a very curious-looking head. Certainly there was scarcely a shadow of resemblance in this portrait to Curtis's own face, except, perhaps, in regard to the regularity of the features. The expression was one of acute suffering. It seemed to me the portrait of a man many years older than Curtis, gaunt, emaciated, broken down by prolonged care and anguish. The skin appeared so tightly drawn over the bones of the face, that it wore quite a skull-like look. The eyes were deeply sunken, yet gleamed like burning coals from out the dark shadow of the overhanging brows. The hair was thin, long, and disordered, blanched apparently by time and sorrow. It was, indeed, a dreadful face, with something unhuman, unearthly, and appalling in the ghastliness and ghostliness of its air and presence. Its looks haunted me long after I had put away from me the drawings. The more I considered them the more a sense of awe and repulsion grew upon me. And this was the face Curtis was for ever seeing in the place of his own in the looking-glass! No wonder, strong man though he was, he had become cowed at last, had felt his brain yielding, had surrendered himself to something like terror.

"Well?" he asked.

For some moments I remained silent. What could I say?

"What do you think of my case?"

The word "monomania" was on my lips, but I refrained from uttering it. Was he, in truth, mad, or was he, as he had himself suggested, the victim of some extraordinary and supernatural visitation?

I begged that he would allow me time to consider the matter fully, and to form a deliberate opinion. I urged him, meanwhile, to give himself repose and change, at any rate.

A fortnight afterwards I received a brief note from him. He did not refer to the subject of our conversation, but bade me adieu for some months. He had undertaken, it appeared, a commission to examine witnesses in a distant colony. He looked forward to the voyage greatly benefiting his health. His letter was in all respects that of a sane man. For years I had no tidings of him whatever.

II.

"I HAVE fewer patients than usual just now," said my friend Doctor Gurwood one day. I was visiting his establishment at Twickenham. "I suppose I ought to congratulate myself on the success of my curative system. Yet now and then I come across a case that baffles me altogether. I will show you a patient who quite defies my skill. He has been some time in my charge, but his state is, I fear, wholly irremediable. I should be glad to have your opinion."

Doctor Gurwood, I should state, was an authority on brain disease, and famous for his successful treatment of the insane.

"The present form of the patient's malady is settled melancholia, with its most difficult and distressing incidents; and these are aggravated by great physical prostration. He is quite harmless. Of acute dementia I have for some time been unable to discover any trace remaining. But his constitution is terribly shattered, and any attempts to rouse the mental faculties have been altogether vain. I have removed as far as possible all restraint and surveillance. I have endeavoured, according to my usual practice in such cases, to bring the patient within the operation of the most kindly, domestic, social, and humanising influences. But the results have, I confess, disappointed me. I fear I can do little more now than leave Nature to work out her own ends. You shall judge for yourself."

He led the way to a small, but well-lit and neatly furnished apartment on an upper floor of the house. In an arm-chair by the window there reclined the motionless, frail, shrunken figure of a man, his head bowed so that the chin rested upon his chest, and his thin wasted hands outstretched, flaccid and helpless, in front of him. I judged him to be sixty years of age. His complexion was of a waxen white: his features looked sharp and rigid from attenuation; he seemed to me more like a carving in ivory than a

creature of flesh and blood. His lips were hueless; his hair, rough and unkempt, harsh and dry in quality, was of an ashen grey. Indeed, the way in which all colour, save of a neutral sort, appeared to have faded from the man as from a dead flower, was one of his most marked characteristics.

"A very hopeless case, I fear," said the physician, after a few moments. He half drew down one of the window-blinds, by way, as it seemed to me, of doing something to excite the attention of the patient. It was in vain, however. The figure remained still as a corpse. He addressed some few words to it, a common-place inquiry. It made no answer.

"This is not one of our good days by any means," said Doctor Gurwood. Gently he touched the man on the shoulder. The figure started a little, raised its head until slowly its eyes came level with the doctor's face. Such strange staring eyes; fierce, and yet blank-looking, from their lack of all human intelligence. There was no recognition in them; there scarcely seemed indeed to be speculation. They were as the wide-open yet purblind eyes of some wild creature dazed by the daylight.

But I then knew, what before had occurred to me involuntarily only as a strange and distressing suspicion. I recognised—I found myself compelled to recognise—the face before me. It was the face Curtis had sketched, the face that haunted him, that, as he had avowed, looked out at him from his looking-glass!

"He never speaks. He will rarely take food except upon compulsion. Yet this obstinacy no longer arises from suicidal mania. All inclination of that kind has long since abated, and I am under no apprehension of its return, so far as its more violent symptoms are concerned, at any rate. He gives little trouble now. But his state does not yield in any appreciable degree to my treatment."

"And you think nothing more can be done for him?"

"I know of nothing. Have you any suggestion to offer? But, indeed, it's clear to me that the man is rapidly sinking."

"You know his story?"

"I have full particulars in my books. I always make it a condition that I am thoroughly informed of a patient's antecedents, and, so far as they can be ascertained, the exciting causes of his malady."

We were now in Doctor Gurwood's private room. He referred to one of the volumes ranged in front of his desk.

"I see he has been now a long time

under my charge, a much longer time than I had thought. His age is forty-six; a barrister by profession; his name Owen Curtis."

I started. The doctor continued turning over the leaves of his book as he spoke.

"I remember all the facts of the case now. He was at one time in very good practice—was highly thought of at the bar. He left England on a commission to examine witnesses at Port Phillip in a case of some importance. His journey was fruitless, however; the case never came into court, but was suddenly compromised. Curtis had been for some time in ailing health. He remained in Australia, and, after an interval, practised at the colonial bar. He had great success, and his prospects were excellent. He was a general favourite; but then occurred an unfortunate accident which I see I have registered here as 'exciting cause of mental alienation.' I can't but think there must have been predisposing conditions, however. It seems he was retained to defend a prisoner on a capital charge. It was a case of murder, or suspected murder, which had occasioned very general excitement in the colony. Curtis was chargeable at most with an error of judgment, an excess of confidence in his own opinion; but the consequences were of a fatal kind. It seems he relied upon a point of law and his skill as an advocate, and withheld from the jury certain important evidence—prevented, indeed, a most material witness from entering the box. The general opinion was that this witness could have fully established the innocence of the accused, for the best of reasons, some say, that the witness was the real criminal, and the accused wholly innocent. But the case for the prosecution involved the prisoner in a complicated web of circumstantial evidence which the advocate vainly endeavoured to break through. He missed the real weak place in it, and misdirected his attack. The defence failed miserably; the prisoner died on the scaffold. Popular sympathies went with him—he was proclaimed a murdered man. Curtis was denounced on all hands. It was ruin to him, or something very like ruin. His health broke down; symptoms of aberration ensued. He was sent home by an early ship to his relations in England. On the passage he went, simply, raving mad, and it was found necessary to confine him in irons. In that state he came to me. He has ever since remained an inmate of my establishment. I don't know that I need enter further into the case; but I

have here full particulars if you feel interested in them. 'Course of treatment pursued,' set out at great length; I like to record every detail of the case, with the dates, medicines administered, &c. 'Acute dementia,' 'acetate of morphia with hot baths,' and so on; 'suicidal monomania;' a long story, you see, until we come to 'settled melancholia,' 'no lucid intervals,' 'general health very bad,' 'extreme prostration of bodily strength.' A very curious case altogether, and, in its way one of the most distressing that ever came under my attention."

He closed the book. I was silent for some minutes, reflecting upon what I had heard. I then stated to Dr. Gurwood the facts of my former acquaintance with Curtis and his consultation with me in regard to his mental condition. I told the story of the delusion, if it was to be so called, under which he laboured.

"That entirely confirms my view that a predisposition to aberration had long existed," said Doctor Gurwood.

"Can you account in any way for the curious circumstance that the face he saw in the glass, or thought he saw, at any rate that he made a drawing of, long years ago, is really an accurate resemblance of the man himself in his present deplorable state?"

He did not answer very directly.

"You are sure that you are not yourself importing fancy into the case? That your own recollection of Curtis's story and of the drawings he exhibited to you, is perfectly sound and unquestionable? Imagination, you know, is very apt to play tricks with memory, to add colour to its facts, to distort their form and substance. The man was, of course, the victim of a delusion. The insanity he now suffers under, had already, though perhaps imperceptibly, commenced. His mind was yielding, it was presently to give away altogether."

I ventured to suggest that his observations did not fairly meet the case.

"I can only deal confidently with my own facts," he said. "I can't accept your facts as though they were within my own experience. I must, if I may say so without offence, doubt your statement of the case. Impressed with Curtis's delusion, have you not built upon it another delusion?"

I could only say that I was not a likely man, I thought, to be the subject of delusions.

"Certainly not," he said. "But it's your case, and, therefore, I don't feel bound to

find an explanation of it. You see, as scientific, as sensible men, we can't admit, we can't discuss for a moment, the conclusion to which your story points, the theory of prophetic vision which Highlanders call or used to call—for I don't suppose they still cling to such notions—*second sight*. There's an explanation for you if you like to accept it."

"But is there no other?" I asked.

"Well," he said, after a pause, "taking your statement of the case, why not regard it as one of mental hallucination attended by remarkable complications of coincidence?"

The definition did not satisfy me, and I could see that he was not himself content with it. But I had not—I have not now—any other to offer.

THE LAMP'S TIDINGS.

A LIGHT step on the gravel outside at this juncture aroused Arthur Stacey's attention, and the next moment the door opened, and one of the Slaves stood before him.

"Sorry to disturb you, Mr. Stacey, at so late an hour," he said, "but Heart's Content has just asked us whether you were at Valentia; and the superintendent thinks you had better come round, as there may probably be a message for you soon."

Arthur Stacey rose, and with a beating heart, accompanied the Slave, who left him in the outer office, while he entered the inner temple alone. The Slave in waiting on the Lamp was murmuring of Copperheads and shoddy, of Erie Railroad and Fernando Wood, and Mr. Gay stood by his side.

He turned round as Arthur entered and said, "Nothing for you yet, Mr. Stacey: this is an apparently interminable press message about matters which are not cared for in America, and not understood in England. Ah! at last there is an end to it," he exclaimed, as the spot of light became stationary in the centre of the screen.

"I should think," said Arthur Stacey,

struggling hard to repress his nervous excitement, which was now very great, "I should think that Cameron must have some news for me, or he would never have inquired if I were here."

"No mistake about that," said Mr. Gay. "Mr. Cameron is the most perfectly practical man I know. I've seen his head tried under many difficulties, and never knew him for an instant to lose—Hullo! what's this? Heart's Content is speaking again. C—A—M, this looks like your message, Mr. Stacey."

The spot of light was already slowly traversing the screen, and the superintendent himself, not a little anxious, bent forward to translate its silent language; but now that Arthur Stacey knew that in another few moments he would learn his future fate, his energies, already so strongly taxed, seemed unequal to the occasion, and he leaned down over the mantelpiece, burying his head in his arms.

"Cameron—Heart's Content—to—Stacey—Valentia," the Slave commenced reading, when Mr. Gay motioned him to be silent, and taking a pencil and paper from his pocket, wrote off the words as they appeared upon the screen. The instant the spot of light became stationary, the superintendent wheeled round and touched Arthur on the shoulder, then immediately grasped him by the hand. "I congratulate you, Mr. Stacey," he cried, in a cheery tone, "you and the young lady. Read what Cameron says. No, you cannot, your eyes are dimmed with tears. Listen, then, while I read the message to you:

"ALL RIGHT. E. P. DIED ON DATE STATED. NEW SCHEME PLOTTED BETWEEN BOWES AND E. P.'S SISTER NOW IN NEW YORK. I HOLD PROOFS. GO HOME AND SETTLE DAY. COMING BACK BY NEXT MAIL."

"Ah, thank God!" cried Arthur, as the superintendent stopped reading, "this is the——" But his voice broke, and the happy tears rolled down his face.

THE END OF THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR 1871.

On the 16th of December,

A NEW SERIAL STORY will be commenced in ALL THE YEAR ROUND,

To be continued from week to week until completed, entitled THE

WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

By the AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
ABERFOYLE	232	Grey Friars (The Bluecoat School)	590	Hazlitt, William	227
Absence of Mind	365	Club, The Kit-Cat	133	How Paris Mourns	150
Accident at the Fatal Vespers	513	Club, The Southampton	227	Hunter (Dr.) on the Wahabees	486
Advertised Dainties	105	Club, The Trumpet	138	Hunting Down an Heiress	109
Africa. Life at Natal	42	Clyde, The River	280	Husbands and Wives	197
Ali Baba in Germany	250	Cock Tavern in Fleet-street, The	349	In the Pit	563
Alsatia, Whitefriars	493	Coffee House, The First	351	India. The Wahabees	486
Amateurs at Mopetown	53	Colonel of Pandours	558	Inelegant Extracts	175
American Debating Club	245	Colonial Life in South Africa	42	Inverary	255
American Shooting Adventure	587	"Come, the Recorders!"	369	Iona, Island of	306
American Slang	402	Constant Couple, The	513	Italian Peasant Play	326, 345
Apparitions in our Time	221	Crow-Boy's Mind, A	61	Ireland Forgeries	205
Ardornish Castle	304	Cuba, Love-making in	418	JUDITH and Holofernes, Play of	328
Argyll, Duke of, Ancestors of the	256	Cuba, Our Studio in	201	June, Wreck of the	157
Armstrong, Sir Thomas, Execution of	438	Curiosities of Letter-Writing	175	Kit-Cat Club, The	133
BARNMEIDE Dainties	105	DAY D. eam of the Earth, A	84	Knight Templars' Buildings	180
Battle, An Escape from the	373	Debating Down East	245	LANGUAGES, The Gift of	366
Ben Lomond	254	Dick's Coffee House	352	La Tude's Escape from the Battle	373
Berlin, Old Legends of	10	Double People	103	Letter-writing, Curiosities of	175
Bill of the Play	666	Drawings, Old Satirical	270	Light Polarised	59
Blackfriars	541	Dream of the Earth	84	Loch Lomond	254
Blackfriars Bridge	545	Dreams, Presentiments	614	Loss of My Spectacles	298
Bluecoat School, The	599	Drummer of Tedworth, The	462	Love Making, in the Tropics	418
Book for Brides	197	Duart Castle	304	Lucky Presentiment	394
Brides, Advice to	197	Dumbarton Castle	279	MACCALLUM MORE	256, 281
British Museum, Prints and Drawings in the	270	Dunstaffnage Castle	302	Maggio in Italy	326
British Museum Reading Room	155	Dust	60	Mail Day in the West	534
Broadsheets and Ballads	270	EARTH, Oscillation Theory	87	Matthias the Ghost Queller	183
Brooke, Lord	78	Essex, Earl of — His Plot and Execution	401	Memory and Absence of Mind	365
Brooke-street, Holborn	78	Essex-street, Strand	397	Memory for Figures	365
CAIRNDAN	282	Execution of Jacobite Gentlemen	441	Military and Militia Camps in 1778	414
Calculators, Extraordinary	365	Execution of Lord Sanquhar	495	Millie, Christine	103
Callander	240	Exeter House	397	Mimlery in Nature	14
Camp on Corkeath, 1778	414	FALLS of Niagara	131, 294	Mitre Tavern, The	354
Camps of Instruction in 1778	414	Fatal Vespers, The	543	Mopetown, Amateurs at	53
Captured by Putagons	273	Feeling Market, A	341	Mopetown, A Penny Reading at	610
Caricatures in the Tudor and Stuart Times	269	Field Boy's Mind, A	61	Murder of Mr. Thynne	320
Case of Josiah Morse	427, 450, 476	Fire and Rain	539	My First Mystery	446
Castaway. By the Author of "Black Sheep"	121	Five Fleet-street Taverns	349	NATAL, South Africa	42
145, 169, 193, 217, 241, 265, 289, 313, 337, 361, 385, 409, 433, 457, 481, 505, 529, 553, 577, 601	543	Fleet-Street Taverns	349	Natural Characteristics	31
Catholics. The Fatal Vespers	543	Forgetfulness, Singular Instances of	368	News from the Camps, 1778	414
Cave of Staffa	305, 306	Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke	78	Niagara, A Visitors' Book at	294
Chantry's Woodcocks	442	GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S Narrative	524	Niagara, A Wrestle with	131
Character and Handwriting	127	546, 569, 596, 616	546, 569, 596, 616	Norman, W. Justice, Murder of	486
Characteristics	31	German Legends	10, 183, 260	OBAN	277, 283, 301
Chatterton the Poet	78	Ghosts of our Time	221	Old Hampshire Family	583
Cheshire Cheese Tavern, The	355	Glasgow	277	Old Holborn	78, 180
Chinese Fairy Tale	567	Grace Allen	498	Old Satirical Prints	269
Chronicles of London Streets: Brooke-street, Holborn	78	Grey Friars	590	Old Stories Re-told: A Colonel of Pandours	558
Serie's place, Temple Bar	133	Grotto of Han	473	An old Rugby Story — The Little Bottle of Laurel Water	516
Southampton - buildings (Holborn end)	180	Guinnard, M., Captured by Patagons	273	Drummer of Tedworth	462
Southampton-buildings (Chancery-lane end)	227	HAMPSHIRE, The Tichborne Family	583	Ireland Forgeries	205
Five Fleet-street Taverns	349	Han, The Grotto of	473	La Tude's Escape from the Battle	373
Essex-street, Strand	397	Handwriting	127	Sacheverell Riots	422
The Six Heads on Temple Bar	438	Haunted House at Tedworth	462	Stoney Robinson — Hunting down an Heiress	109
Whitefriars	493				
Blackfriars	541				

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
"Tom of Ten Thousand" . . .	318	Shakespeare at Blackfriars Theatre . . .	542	Trip to the Land of Scott . . .	230
Wreck of the Juno . . .	157	Shakespeare Papers—The Ireland Forgeries . . .	205	Trumpet Club, The . . .	138
Orchestras at Theatres . . .	369	"Shutters" . . .	83	Two-headed Nightingale . . .	103
Ossian or no Ossian . . .	37	Six Heads on Temple Bar . . .	438	Two Sides of a Story . . .	19
Our Suburban Common . . .	491	Sky, The . . .	57	Tyndall's Fragments of Science . . .	44, 65, 92, 117
Our Studio in the West Indies . . .	201	Sleepers and Somnambulists . . .	6		
Oxburgh, Colonel, Execution of . . .	441	Sleep-Talkers . . .	9		
		Somnambulists . . .	6	VANCOUVER's Island, Mail Day in . . .	534
PAMPEAN Indians . . .	275	South African Life . . .	42	Vespers, Accident at . . .	543
Parkyns and Friend, Execution of . . .	441	South America, Three Years a Slave in . . .	273	Visitors' Book, A . . .	294
Paris after the Siege . . .	150	Southampton-buildings (Chancery-lane End) . . .	227		
Paris Communists on Trial . . .	392	Southampton-buildings (Holborn End) . . .	180	WAHABEES, The . . .	486
Paris On the Road to . . .	390	Southampton Club . . .	227	Walking in Sleep . . .	6
Paris—Tokens of the Spoiler . . .	390	Southampton House . . .	182	Wasted Presentiments . . .	614
Paris Vignettes . . .	390	Spectres of our Time . . .	221	Western Slang . . .	402
Patagons, Captured by . . .	273	Spectacles, The Loss of My . . .	298	Westminster, The Scone Stone at . . .	302
Penny Reading at Mopetown, A . . .	610	Square at Last . . .	587	Whistfield, A Dinner at . . .	257
Pit of a Theatre, History of the . . .	563	Staffa, The Cave of . . .	303	Wine Circulars . . .	107
Poems of Ossian . . .	37	Stage Whispers . . .	468	Wives, Good Advice to . . .	197
Polarised Light . . .	59	Stoney Robinson . . .	109	Whitefriars . . .	493
Pompadour, Madame de, A Victim of . . .	373	Stories : . . .		Whitehall, Tilt Yard . . .	79
Presentiments . . .	614	All Baba in Germany . . .	250	Wreck of the Juno . . .	157
Pretender in London, The . . .	401	Case of Josiah Morse . . .	427, 450, 476	Wrestle with Niagara . . .	131
Printing House-square . . .	542	Chinese Fairy Tale . . .	567	Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton . . .	181
Prints, Old Caricatures . . .	269	Geoffrey Luttrell's Narrative . . .	524		
Professor Tyndall's Works . . .	57	546, 569, 595, 616		POETRY.	
Protective Mimicry . . .	14	Grace Allen . . .	498	A CHOICE . . .	468
Protective Resemblances . . .	14	Loss of My Spectacles . . .	298	At a Window . . .	253
		Lucky Presentiment, A . . .	394	Bookworm, The . . .	492
RAIN, A Cause of . . .	539	Matthias the Ghost-Queller . . .	183	Covenantor, The . . .	396
Rainbow Tavern . . .	351	My First Mystery . . .	445	Death Struggle . . .	84
Reading Made Easy . . .	155	Three Odd Legends of Berlin . . .	10	Falls of Niagara . . .	297
Reading Room, British Museum . . .	155	Two Sides of a Story . . .	19*	Fourfold Aspect . . .	277
Real Horses . . .	510			Glove, The . . .	325
Resemblances in Nature . . .	14	TEMPLE BAR, Six Heads on . . .	438	If . . .	373
Rhoderick Dhu . . .	233	Theatre. A Bill of the Play . . .	606	In a Canoe . . .	13
Rob Roy . . .	233	Theatre. "Come, the Recorders!" . . .	369	In a Strange Country . . .	421
Rose and the Key, The . . .	1	Theatre. In the Pit . . .	563	July Twilight . . .	205
25, 49, 73, 97, 139, 164, 187, 210, 235, 258, 283, 308, 330, 356, 380, 405 . . .	281	Theatre. The Blackfriars . . .	512	King Alfred's Will . . .	133
Rothsey Castle . . .	281	Theatre. Real Horses . . .	510	My Pictures . . .	36
Rugby Story—The Little Bottle of Laurel Water . . .	516	Theatre. Stage Whispers . . .	468	Nature's Comforting . . .	179
Russell, Lord, Execution of . . .	83	Theatrical Amateurs of Mopetown . . .	53	Prayers, The . . .	349
Ryo House Plot . . .	438	Theatrical "Shutters" . . .	83	Rome, 1870 . . .	61
		Three Odd Legends of Berlin . . .	10	Saint Swithin . . .	157
SACHEVERELL Riots, The . . .	422	Thynne, Mr., The Murder of . . .	320	Serenade . . .	516
Sanquhar, Lord, Execution of . . .	495	Tieborne Family, The . . .	583	She and I . . .	541
Satirical Prints . . .	269	Tobermory . . .	395	Shipwreck . . .	301
Savage, The Poet . . .	82	"Tom of Ten Thousand" . . .	318	Sketch, A . . .	445
Science for the Unscientific . . .	57	Townley, Colonel, Execution of . . .	442	Summer Calm . . .	109
Scotch Facing Market . . .	311	Trenck, Adventures of . . .	558	Summer in France, 1871 . . .	589
Scotland, A Trip to . . .	230, 253, 277, 301			Sun, The . . .	40
Scot's Place, Temple Bar . . .	133			Trust, A . . .	610
Shakespeare in London . . .	182			Two Surrey Landscapes . . .	230
				Waiting . . .	563